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# A PITMAN LOOKS AT OXFORD

*By the same author*

FROM A PITMAN'S NOTEBOOK
(*Jonathan Cape Ltd.*)

# A PITMAN LOOKS AT OXFORD

*By*

ROGER DATALLER

32868

LONDON

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# FOREWORD

WITH this fugitive record of university life—for you will flit without warning from a Union discussion or a drunken brawl to the slow rain of blossom on the Cherwell—it may not appear inapposite to set out one or two particulars concerning the author.

He springs from a generation of miners, that order of working people who can spend but little, and live by manual labour. From the age of thirteen, until entering the university, he has been compelled to earn his own living, beginning as a bottle-washer in a mineral-water factory, and moving progressively as carter, steel-worker, and lastly, with eight years' service underground, as a colliery timekeeper.

He did not—for it is increasingly the mode with working-class writers—'drift' into the coal mines. He accepted what the colliery had to offer because at the moment conditions there were distinctly better than those obtaining in the iron and steel industry. He did not 'drift' into the university. In course of time he applied for a Miners' Welfare Scholarship, secured it, and accordingly entered

Oxford to take up a degree course in history. He welcomes this opportunity of thanking that committee, with Lord Chelmsford as chairman, for its unvarying kindness, and also of paying some sort of tribute to the services of Mr. A. M. Anderson, its indefatigable secretary.

That he (the author) is a class-conscious being goes without saying. Are we not all class-conscious?

> At the bottom they must *know* we are really superior, don't you think?
>
> Don't you think, *really*, they *know* we're their superiors?

He will not regard with too urbane an eye the presumption upon service, and the grosser evils consequent within a university fed by public schools which are not public at all. He will not consider easily the many features still established to minister to this foible or to that prejudice of the ruling classes. With the recollection of so much excellent material in the mines from which he came, and the evidence upon every hand of values that still render Oxford and its colleges an upper and middle class preserve, he cannot plead forgiveness for incursive foray or display of arms. Where public men have uttered public pronouncements he has acted, sometimes as bare reporter, more often than not as critic. He has endeavoured to retain inviolate the sanctity of

private conversation, and to display such only where general observations have demanded it, and such statement has been necessary to the general bearing of his case.

Even so, the prevailing note of these succeeding pages will be one of profound affection for the university. Wisdom, and an unforgettable fellowship, imposes its own armistice. To have shared the timeless quality of these old walls—honeyed stone in the sunlight—and of the lawns that bring tranquillity, is benediction enough.

Thus the term runs to a close. As he bangs the door of his lodgings for the last time, and takes the sudden dip to the station, he is conscious of an Oxford that is not to be denied.

R. D.

*September* 1932.

# CONTENTS

## 1928

PAGE

OCTOBER . . . . . 3

The Scholarship. Southern Train. Oxford Cement Works. Journal. Freshman. Later—. The Warden. All Souls. Street Scene. Things one should know. Solicitation. The Lecture. Initiate. Olympus. The Shelley Memorial. New College Garden. Labour Club. The Romantic. Matriculation. Theme. Chanticleer. Setting. Supervisor. The Master—and Peace. English Club.

NOVEMBER . . . . . 39

Gunpowder Treason. Background. 'Yatscombe.' The Summons. Hoax. The Whig. Excursion. Catechism. Poet. A New Society. Maiden Speech. Back Bench Union Speech. Ghosts. Economical Reform. Overheard in the Broad. These Charming People. Imperial Politics.

DECEMBER . . . . . 64

Vacation. Home.

## 1929

JANUARY . . . . . 69

Battels. The Gloomy Dean. Humbert Wolfe.

FEBRUARY . . . . . 76

The Nationalist. Invitation. Encounter. The Gulls. B.M. The New Adelphi. Presidential Debate. Interlude.

## 1929—*continued*

PAGE

MARCH . . . . . 87
'Toggers.' Drunks—Total and Semi-. The Buchmanite. Tea and Experience.

APRIL . . . . . 94
Return. Barter.

MAY . . . . . 96
May Morn. 'Town, Village, and Country Labourers.' Encounter. The Parks.

OCTOBER . . . . . 101
Shadows. Review. The Younger Generation. Outsiders.

NOVEMBER . . . . . 107
Supervisory. 'Miners' Welfare.' Interlude.

DECEMBER . . . . . 112
Invitation. Catacomb.

## 1930

JANUARY . . . . . 117
Thesis.

FEBRUARY . . . . . 118
G.D.H. The Will to Power. Alcohol. The Essay Society.

MAY . . . . . 128
The Martineau Club. Beautiful but Dumb. The Mystic. Ruskin.

JUNE. . . . . 138
Subfusc. Vale.

PAGE

OCTOBER . . . . . 140
Encounter. Curriculum. F. R. Barry. A Walton Street Nest. The Better Class. The Peace Group. Candidate. Landladies. Viva Voce. Solicitation.

NOVEMBER . . . . . 156
The Friends' Meeting House. Examination.

## 1931

FEBRUARY . . . . . 163
America. The Mission. Credit. Mr. Jas. Maxton.

MARCH . . . . . 171
From a College Window. Men and Women.

MAY . . . . . 177
From a Distance. Convalescent.

JUNE. . . . . 178
Return. The Public School Boy. The Degree Ceremony. The Education of the Whole Man. Retrospect. Of Contemporaries Farewell.

The underground office had never appeared particularly cosy, but now in these last few moments he was very loath to leave the battered cupboards and the snugly circumscribing walls. Still, time was running out. Already it was half-past twelve.

He strolled out of the office, and placing his shoulder against the great wooden door in the corridor, thrust against the cushion of air that held it firmly in place. The door gave reluctantly —and instantly smacked to behind him. In other days this door had always seemed to clap upon its framework with a sinister racket, symbolic of the mine. In this farewell hour it was only a wooden structure clattering a little foolishly as the air current swung it in again.

Ahead, some fifty yards or more, the pit-bottom lamps were shining. He could see the tiny cages halting for a moment, and then plucked upwards in the void by an invisible thread. A train of corves ran to the chairs, a dark glittering serpent winding from the inmost recesses of the workings. Methodically the bottom men were

cutting off the head of that serpent—three corves in the upper deck, three in the lower—but the body never lessened. Powerful, insistent, it crept upon the cages. Day after day the bottom men were lopping off the serpent's head. They would be doing this Monday morning sharp on the stroke of six. It was difficult to conjure a Monday in which one would not stroll into the dust and clangour of the pit bottom, there to swap a word with the onsetter and to register the output.

A brisk succession of sounds drew him to a standstill. It was the flat effect of a pick blade biting into the coal where the wall ran in the shadow. That would be Renfrew cutting out the new pick storeroom. He ought to have a word with Renfrew.

The collier was working with his back to the lamplight, a filmy green electric one. A ghoulish shadow slid across the 'face' as his blade assailed the wall ahead. At every blow a shower of splinters fell with a sound like that of breaking glass. He turned as he saw the timekeeper. 'Hullo,' he said, shivering, 'it 's mortal cowd i' this draughty place. You 've got to keep a singlet on. When art goin' to the university?'

'I 'm finishing to-day,' answered the timekeeper. Ought he to make some demonstration of regret? In the dark hollow the coal threw off

faint noises like titterings. He thought of Oxford, the sunlight on the meadows.

'Well, tha 'll be glad enow to be rid of a dusty hoile like this.'

'It will be a great change.' (How difficult it was to find appropriate words, and he liked Renfrew.) 'Of course, I 'm sorry I 'm leaving.'

'I know—I know,' grinned the collier. 'Good luck to thee—and gi' me the time before tha goes.'

There would be time to push in a word with the horsekeeper if one contrived to hurry, then back across the bottom again. In the warm air of his little den the stableman was surveying his stock of lubricating oils. 'These 'll last another three months,' he announced with a half-turn of his head. 'Longer 'ner me, perhaps. Have ye ever tried a bit o' this horse's cough paste?' He scraped his finger round a battered tin and sucked it. His tongue ran on. 'Your time 's getting short now. You 'll not be sorry to put your checks in?'

'Oh, I don't know,' said the timekeeper. He sniffed lingeringly. There was always something heady about the air of the stables—hay, oats, sawdust, and the odour of the animals. A brisk, unfailing conviviality. He turned with a start. Two colliers clattered by, the first of a thickening flight. Their dudleys were slung, shorts drawn

bulkily through their belts at the back. He knew that the shift was ending. He followed slowly.

In the pit bottom there was a fairish cluster. Pushing forward, the colliers filled the chair so that there was no room left for the timekeeper. 'Next time,' said the onsetter, 'this 'll be thy last journey, I reckon?' The last journey? What sinister implication lay behind the friendly phrase? One remembered a marble tablet not a mile away, set up to commemorate one tragic breaking of a winding rope. How if these strands should not sustain the winding? Of what avail the promise of Oxford?

With a slight hiss of grease the cage slid down before their eyes. He stepped inside. Three others followed, and a fourth came running lightly — an Irish deputy, swearing good-humouredly as the onsetter rapped the bell. Then the chains upon the roof of the chair clanked solidly, and the floor pulled at one's feet. They were off, and up. . . . The slimy walls were straking downwards . . . mounting . . . mounting . . . with a slightly elastic play in the long steel rope that made the cage floor bounce beneath their feet. Up . . . up . . . the rope snatched petulantly. They were drawing near the surface now—the light greyed in. There was a faint glow of sunshine, a warmer burst. Then the pithead platform came abreast, and slid beneath

their feet. The banksman thrust in the 'fallers'. This was the end. . . .

He was mounting the hill away from the colliery. Even now it was impossible to believe that he had severed all connection with it. There it lay in a shallow fold, its twin chimneys throwing off a lengthy scarfe of smoke, its outer works compact as those of a battle cruiser. As he raised his hand in a gesture of farewell there seemed (in that moment) nothing extraordinary in the illusion that all these rolling hills might flow with the movement of waters and the trim chimneys and surrounding body break loose suddenly, and with a long streamer of western smoke sail over the green undulations to the farthest horizon. But the colliery still stood, rigid and self-contained, as he took the turning in the road, and it fell away from sight. . . .

OCT. 8. *Southern Train*

He didn't want to go. He stood upon the platform counting out the seconds as pearls slipped through the fingers, making conversation, and uttering the most hopeless inanities. 'What a vivid effect the new paint has on the railings across.' . . . No answer. . . . 'Crowds of people here this morning.' . . . No answer. . . .

'This sort of train is always late.' . . . What sort of train? . . .

Nor did she desire him to go. But the fateful engine snorted alongside, and a carriage door flew open with a sinister invitation. Nothing now save to step inside. She contrived to mutter: 'You 'd better take this'. She was thankful that the platform lay in the shadow. . . .

A gramophone tinkled in the compartment. On the opposite seat a woman was working a portable machine—she had just lowered the needle to the record. As he closed the door and opened the window the mellifluous flow of Offenbach's *Barcarolle* streamed upon the morning air. Words were impossible, and the music mocked. Then the train drew away from the figure on the platform. Girders slid by—a flickering tracery . . . the waiting figure elevated an arm. Then the arch of the bridge cut out everything, and fell, bleak barrier, between the old experience and the new. . . .

The woman opposite closed the gramophone and lit a cigarette. He disliked her from the beginning—the plastered enamel, tinted death, mask of her cheeks; the thin white hand dandling the cigarette, the thin, selfish lips emitting smoke. But then, nothing on earth, save a sudden reversal of the engine, would have pleased him in that moment. A clergyman in the other corner

barked a compliment about the music. Who was he? A ritualist as like as not, with Romish tendencies—importunate in practice, but far too timorous to release himself from the economic security of his church. The woman murmured 'Naice'. The clergyman without a further word lifted his book. He was reading *Beau Geste*. . . .

The train ran on. It was easy in that somnolent sunshine to open the door upon memory. One simply closed one's eyes and walked into that yesterday when at fourteen, with the *open sesame* of a leaving certificate, one had entered the factory, self-styled 'mineral-water,' as a junior bottle-washer. Rather exciting at first that sloppy interior with its steaming boshes, revolving brushes, glistening glass, and over all, the secret alchemy of the essence cupboard, where dusty jars held the potencies of horehound, cider, and bitters. The factory gobbled up a year (or was it a year and a half?) of that early period when, with the advance of a good four shillings a week, the steel works succeeded. Number taking . . . not much of a job . . . exciting enough at times . . . crawling under wagons, scrambling over stacks of wet ironstone, and at odd times on the night-shift with the lamp extinguished, tracing the metal outlines of the wagon numbers with one's fingers. The steel mill, with chinks of furnace light silvering the

worn chequers of the flooring, came later. Rolls, eating up the white-hot metal, and shears clipping the plates like paper, rosy dawns beyond the stark girder roofing—that was the mill. . . . Too little money, however. Inevitably the road ran to the mine. It was easy to remember that first attendance—the group huddled around the brazier on the pithead platform, the swift descent, the years underground . . . and then the *scholarship*!

It was so easy to marvel at the scholarship. Could it be really true that several years of reading and general study in a room often occupied by half a dozen people at a time, had blossomed into this? The MINISTRY OF MINES in Millgate loomed tangibly enough—the Selection Committee: the brisk business-like tones of the secretary, the indulgent presence of Lord Chelmsford in the chair, the half-amused, half-appraising eyes of Lady Mabel Smith to the left, and the portentous figure of Professor Tawney on the right hand, still smacked of reality. That question! 'You assert, sir, an essential difference between the miner as a workman, and the steel-worker. Will you tell us what it is?' What inspiration was it that prompted a reply in terms of steel-men as children of light, and the miners as children of darkness? Without theological implication! Whatever it was, some laughter

emerged . . . and after further questions, dismissal into outer Westminster. . . .

Weeks passed. There was a night in Doncaster where a newsboy handled a placard: YORKSHIRE MINER . . . SCHOLARSHIP. . . . Yes, in black and white, the imprint of one's own name—a degree course in Oxford.

Still amazing. In the north country men hovered rosily before the furnace doors, keen eyes ranging white-hot interiors, sweat towels sagging from their teeth. Loaded corves were clanking as usual into a hundred pit-bottoms; firemen were placing their shots, and hewers dark with dust were plying rhythmic blades. . . .

Nottingham . . . Leicester . . . the pitheads were thinning out, the rubble tips more scattered. The dark belt of the coal-fields drew behind. Green fields wheeling . . . a glint of water . . . cattle browsing . . . a marvellous thatched cottage. What of Oxford?

Noon falls on Oxford, noon on Oxford town.

A stray line by Flecker. 'Oh, you 'll revel in Oxford!' Whose charge was that? 'Sell all that thou hast, and enter the university!' And that? Better wait and see. Here 's Banbury . . . shrill voices crying cakes . . . the clergyman alights holding his *Beau Geste* in the air. The woman left at Nottingham. . . .

Willows . . . meadows. . . .

*Oxford Cement Works*

Drawing near. Across the meadow diminutive riders caracole in the distance. Houses . . . the signal box . . . the platform. Knots of undergraduates? Bags? Taxi? Yes, there are three bags. Lodgings? The taxi swings the curve. . . .

*Journal*

My lodgings have deep window recesses, shadowed winding stairways, Tudor fireplaces, and black crazy oak beams. Undoubtedly the house is old. We have an aquatint of the street made in the year that the young Pretender rode down to Derby. Where now the tall apartment houses range were reverend chestnuts, and of cottages only one—this place.

Tradition—the hack!—asserts that here monks forgathered in their lighter moments with drink and song, for it was something of an ale-house. That is as may be. If ghostly visitations are still the rule, let Brother Hilarius beat his ghostly can with adequate discretion, for tired as I am, I ask a peaceful night. . . .

My fellow-lodger is a tall, debonair ex-Ruskin man, with an extra-mural scholarship, reading Modern Greats. . . . Although we do not share rooms, we are to eat together. . . .

Later—I purchase a notebook, and down Broad Street—hereinafter the Broad—slip along to peep at the college. A vista of the quad, a reach of lawn, and of grey stone melting in the dusk. Then into High Street, and so to the end of Magdalen Bridge beneath the tower and the elms. . . .

At ten, walked out again. At the corner of Balliol met three young sprigs in dinner jackets, semi-drunk, playfully holding up people on the pavement. . . . And so to bed. . . .

. . . . . .

A restless night. Time dragged heavily, and after midnight heard all the chimes till three. Watched the lights doused one by one in the prim Georgian houses opposite. Read Amiel. Put out the light but not to sleep, lapsing into a negative inquietude. What is it that one misses most of all—the brisk metallic clatter of clogs in the thoroughfare? The deep thrust of the colliery engine? The dull reflection of furnace fires, flushing the walls, and throwing up with certitude pictures and items of furniture?

In the street autos whine, flash a headlight beam across the dormer window . . . and drone into extinction. A few roisterers straggle by shouting. Somewhere a clock marks the hour . . . a second or two later, a further succession

of chimes. Then, like echoes, far removed, others. . . .

The old house broods in silence. The dark beam shows strongly beneath the faint grey of the ceiling. Beside the door, in the plaster, is a splayed finger-print, not a large one. An apprentice may be, larking in olden Oxford? The hand no doubt has long ago fallen to dust, but there it hovers, this unconsequential witness of vitality, as though imposed but yesterday. The staircase creaks suddenly. . . .

The structure is so old. It is difficult to resist the impression that the house has not *grown* together, lifting from the thin moss of the garden like a well-established tree. Before the wind the house sways slightly as a tree would sway, not rocking like a chimney or a skyscraper, but giving like a heavy branch. A sudden banging of the front door makes the whole house tremble. The structure trembles, and one is able to note that, like a growing thing, with a natural element of recovery, it reassumes a normal poise. The very walls are full of sap. . . .

A brittle sound emerges from the Tudor fireplace. What can it be? A cricket? A cricket chirrups, and now the noise has dropped away. A faint scratching? . . . servants scratched lightly upon panels in other days in notice of entry . . . there it is again—scratch—scratch. . . .

A mouse of course. What a house for mice! I sling a slipper across. There is a silence wherein I strike a match. Half-past two. . . .

The mouse begins again. Well, let it be. It had first possession in any case, and its lineage in this university may very well be more unbroken than most. . . .

. . . . .

'Milk ho!'

A soft fluting from the street announces morning. . . .

Anything may happen after that. One waits expectantly for 'Chairs to mend!' or 'Who 'll buy my sweet lavender?'

OCT. *Freshman*

Attended a meeting of freshmen in the hall. Strange to take one's place in a group of fifty perhaps, not a soul of whom one knows. I spoke to one man who seemed at a loose end; but on entering the hall lost him, and took my seat with a feeling of utter and devastating loneliness.

The hall is a venerable, well-timbered old place; a number of oil portraits set over the high table. Through the windows light falls, breaking into many colours. On the tables one finds pen, ink, and an empty matriculation form. . . .

The Dean — a rosy, comfortable figure — explains. To-morrow he will lead the matriculation students through the prescribed formalities. A dress is indicated: *subfusc*, which, being interpreted means the wearing (or bearing) of a cap; gown, dark blue or brown or black suit, white collar, shirt, and bow, black socks and shoes. Will gentlemen please fill in their forms?

I write down name, age, birthplace. Then my father's name. The next question is: *Father's occupation.* I pause. What has that to do with the matter? I am on the point of making some comment to my neighbour when I see that he is writing down in the same place, *gentleman*, and feeling that he would probably misunderstand my intervention, I write down *miner*, and complete the formality. Now the Dean makes a roll-call, and one by one each man approaching the dais hands over his form. I pass up and learn that my matriculation must wait . . .

*Later—*

Utter loneliness. According to all the most informative textbooks about Oxford there is a vast chumming up at this moment, though I suspect it obtains in respect of public school boys rather than with others. In their case the thread of contact is easy to maintain — they

know men who are up, or who have been up. Their athletic records (assuming such a record) have been passed on, and so forth. With the secondary school, or provincial university man, going is much more difficult; and with the extra-mural student more difficult still. One must, without the aid of a school tie, discover acquaintances and friends. . . .

At this moment everything appears a rather forlorn business. Around me men are talking motor cars, and rowing; or 'huntin', shootin', fishin''; and since I cannot appear enthusiastic about any of these things (for which I care not a button) for more than five minutes, the prospect of friendships appears decidedly thin. . . .

At Rewley House Mr. E. S. Cartwright and Mr. H. P. Smith maintain a paternal eye upon the W.E.A. men—I have an invitation to take coffee with them. . . .

## *The Warden*

This morning I interviewed the Warden at his lodgings—a scholar, with a political incursion of some brilliance to his record, he falls appropriately into this mellow setting of many books, dim paintings (is it a Watts I see?), and deep comfortable chairs. With long legs crossed, and finger tips set disposedly together, he apprehends

my future. What am I inclined to do?—take *Modern Greats*, Economics, Philosophy, Politics, or work upon a B.Litt. thesis? In the end the thesis has it; but what kind of thesis? Most themes, like materials upon a bargain counter, have been industriously handled, and there are only one or two remnants left. What about a History of the Sheffield Trades? A monograph on Thomas Love Peacock? The Wesleyan Revival and the Radical Movements of the Eighteenth Century? The last would appear to hold possibilities. Better push inquiries farther. Better interview a Fellow of All Souls. Meanwhile I am to attend lectures. A background is not without importance. . . .

### *All Souls*

Clip-clop! up the stone staircase with the light green walls and the doorways shouting famous names. I find a door at the corridor end, and pause and knock. A voice calls. I enter. The history don is occupied with the floor, whereon he is unpacking many volumes of import. Will I take a seat for a moment? Serried rows of the *Dictionary of National Biography* occupy the middle distance. He explains that he 's just had a windfall, and so has purchased these.

I take a deep chair. The very air smacks of

antiquity. The table, for all its burden of books and papers, is riven with age. Modernity gleams with electric bulbs in the heavy gilt candlelabra, but the gesture is frail, incidental. The writing desk has a drawer for quill pens and sand, and the room is a sweep of tarnished mirrors, panels, and books. Through the window one glimpses the dome of the Radcliffe Camera. I suppose if I cared to lift myself a little further from my seat I should behold a leisurely figure in clerical bands, or cocked hat, and skirted coat, crossing the quad. . . .

At last the don is disengaged. He, too, with disposedly set fingers dwells upon my future. The eighteenth century? Ah, yes—yes. . . . Background . . . background. . . .

### *Street Scene*

Youth occupies the city—youth in flannels and light buff jackets, enormously exuberant in the herd, rather nonchalant alone. Along Walton Street strolls one in possession of his first Aberdeen terrier. Entrancing hour. Portentous perambulation! He is stealing sly glances at his treasure the moment he conceives himself alone. . . .

In the Broad a group parades a cliché with insistent irony. Now it is *pleasing*—a *pleasing*

trait, a *pleasing* alliance, and so forth. They are not a little intoxicated with words. Oliver Wendell Holmes speaks of a man who drags a fact around like a bulldog at his heels ready to let it loose on the slightest provocation. So R——, with whom I lunched to-day, parades *revolting*. The coffee was *revolting*—in point of fact it was quite good coffee. The traffic in the High was *revolting*. And a certain lecturer *revolting*. . . .

At the corner of New College Lane a couple of men pause for a mutual exchange. The first —in a dark navy sweater, the high neck cuddling his ears—emits a conversational sound: 'Wha gha?'

Shades of Sitting Bull!

Since his companion mentions the word 'Blackwell's,' I can only conclude that the explosion represents 'Where are you going?'

This I suppose is the Oxford accent. . . .

### *Things one should know*

At tea in the college to-day, the Warden's wife tossed me a question: 'And what are *you* reading, Mr. Dataller?'

I answered brightly: 'Trevelyan's *Early History of Charles Fox*'.

Whereat laughter. Later I learnt that she

was merely inquiring the school of studies. And the answer is just—History!

. . . . .

Loneliness prevails, yet not without odd countermine and sap. To-night I found the Wesleyan minister, the Rev. J. H. Bodgener, a man of singular charm, in my rooms. With him were two undergraduates. South Yorkshire had sent my name, I suppose. Later went down to the B.s' in Woodstock Road, and walked for a while with one of the men. We both had an ADELPHI enthusiasm, and talked Murry for a time.

There are three other Miners' Welfare Scholarship students here; two in Balliol, and one in Univ. Of the Rewley House students, one is a railway clerk; one a teacher (ex-miner), one a postal worker, one a solicitor's clerk, and so on. . . .

. . . . .

To-night after leaving the Martyrs Memorial I retraced my steps, and from a point near the 'Randolph' surveyed Woodstock Road, the still façade of St. John's to the right, ahead the leafy avenue in perspective. Lights shone brilliantly through the crystal air, a nocturne of great charm. Then with my back to Carfax, strolled beneath the trees, marking the play of light in the leafage overhead—still wondering vaguely why a film

had been removed, and the cool and scintillating night revealed in this enchanting fashion. Chimneys, of course! There is not a tall chimney in Oxford. No smoke. No soot. No manufactories. The clear medieval atmosphere remains. . . .

### *Solicitation*

Meanwhile, flight upon flight of correspondence. This morning an envelope:

O.H.M.S. O.U. AIR SQUADRON

with a picture of a plane and the caption, 'A Member of the Squadron receiving Flying Instruction'. A university organization under Air Ministry direction, which provides flying and aeronautical training without tuition fees. . . .

Another from the O.U.O.T.C.; in which I may learn 'to ride, to fly, and shoot under special advantageous conditions . . .'

Then there is the obeisance of 'respectful compliments', the preliminary of tailors soliciting patronage. 'The fact that —— & Co. are to-day working for many ex-Varsity clients, some of whom went down fifty years ago,' is put forward as just one reason why they should work for you. What may not one read into this declaration?

Solicitations from clubs and hotels arrive—religious settlements, holiday agencies. A billiard

saloon? Now one must withstand the allurement of 'four new tables, fitted with Patent Steel-Block Vacuum Cushions'. One can use a telephone there, and indulge in private lessons. . . .

St. Aldates makes its plea with sermons and meetings for undergraduates; the Oxford Mission to Calcutta awaits; the League of Nations is extending membership. Do I wish to subscribe to the *University News*? Here is fitting opportunity. The editor announces that he is willing to receive callers at any time. 'I hope that we shall have the pleasure of meeting you, not only as reader, but (artful!) also as a contributor.' The League of the Kingdom of God invites notice; the Oxford University Club and Union; and the Conservative Association allures with a delightful blotter. . . .

. . . . . .

This in its violet-like modesty arrived to-day:

DEAR SIR,

To be a freshman at Oxford is a thing that you can only experience once; the first term 'up' will be one of the events by which you will measure, in the future, your course of life.

That is one reason why you will want to have a photograph of yourself 'taken the year I went up to Oxford'.

Another equally good and pressing reason why you should be photographed without delay is that a portrait is a pleasant and personal form of Christmas gift.

Although your first impulse may be to deny it, there

are sure to be at least two or three people—your mother, your sister, or very close friends—who would like very much to have a photograph of you *this* year.

We have had the pleasure of photographing members of the university for over fifty years, and we are told that our work has always been of the highest class of craftsmanship. Modern ideas and modern equipment have kept it up to date.

Perhaps you will give this matter consideration, and we will soon hope to have the opportunity of serving you, as we have served your predecessors. . . .

## *The Lecture*

I have no gown (commoners are required to wear a slight, rather stupid affair), nor shall I be entitled to wear a gown until I have been excused Responsions. So with a notebook, and my heart a little more urgent than it ought to be, I enter the Schools at twelve. Shall I be admitted? It is easy to drift with a flow of men through the lobby, pass a suspicious familiar, and find oneself mounting the broad stairs without challenge.

A thin sprinkling in the lecture school. Girls abound, herding protectively towards the southern side, evoking with their pointed caps a picture seen somewhere of Ellen Terry as Portia. The air is lively with unaffected chatter, and conversation landscape scale. One appears to pass from a community where the roughest of men regard a personal exchange as something sufficiently

ntimate to be subdued, into a society where eflections, however trivial, are imposed upon the world at large.

One takes a seat. The scarred wood of the desk is thick with a mosaic of faces—of heads mainly feminine, with features leering, smirking, scowling: faces with moustaches and eyeglasses. Joans and Monicas, frail relics of adolescent passion. The mosaic is made vocal with fatuous WHO RU's, and OIC's. Enough of that. . . .

Ahead sit two Japanese, bland, blinking, exchanging no conversation, the black patent leather of their hair glistening with oil. A bearded figure sits on the right—South American, does his high sombrero swing upon a peg in the lobby?—his skin a glowing, olive gold, his pointed Spanish beard a wisp of fluff in the sunlight. Two nuns drift into chairs, and pass the minutes tittering softly behind their fingers. The chatter drifts, falls, increases. The panelled walls glow strangely in the sunshine. Above the array of desks two figures in the regimentals of a vanished century look down with presidential gaze. . . .

Now Professor Gordon comes, his long gown billowing in the aisle, eyes twinkling behind glasses (in creditable imitation of the late President Wilson), to lecture about Shakespeare. He takes his stand. The doors are closed. . . .

'The Romantics of the last century really believed that they had *discovered* Shakespeare. . . .' Down it goes, black upon white. . . . The many shoulders are bowed; the bared heads, the square caps dip; the pleasant voice flows on. Occasionally a page flutters. . . .

*Initiate*

'It 's easy to mark a new-comer.' B—— smiles. 'Why?'

'All the meetings first term. Don't blush. I was like that once myself. If you want to recognize a third-year man, look out for someone who doesn't give a damn how he 's dressed. Now your fresher . . .' B—— is in his second year.

*Olympus*

Down Boars Hill autumn flames to the confines of Oxford—trees and shrubs that burn and are not consumed. On my Yorkshire ridge, where the branches are almost naked, odd leaves will be fluttering forlornly. Here with manifold tinting the countryside assumes this mantle. Here, also, fitly live the Olympians, Gilbert Murray, Robert Bridges, John Masefield. . . .

*The Shelley Memorial*

Into University College, and along that dark corridor where, behind a grille, the dead Shelley

lies in marble. So, with limbs slackly disposed, he awaits the generation of pilgrims. Yet one would linger for no more than a moment. This is Shelley dead—and where is that gleaming one, Ariel of the flashing wing?

> From every form the beauty slowly waned;
> From every firmest limb and fairest face
> The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
> The action and the shape without the grace
> Of life. . . .

Come away. At least we remember that in these precincts part of his buoyant youth was spent, and hope and love flashed out in fire. 'The curious feature is, that his own college turned him down.' Is it so curious? The comment pursues one. Had they but known? Well, such men encountered the living Shelley face to face . . .

Out into the High where the Schools are losing. One searches eagerly one face after another. Any undergraduate may be a Shelley in disguise.

### *New College Garden*

It is very quiet here. While a stiff breeze beats upon the old walls of the city—which are also those of the garden—and thrashes at a dizzy height the vast screens of beech and chestnut foliage, within the shadow of the masonry, late

flowers bear unruffled petals. Mark these bastion slits once made for fighting, and it would be difficult not to concede a romantic tinge to the moment. There was a day when the lush countryside flowed to this very border. There is still an inn where turf-cutters forgathered. The garden itself displays a mound once used for artillery, for within a stone's throw from this place Charles assembled his fugitive parliament, and from these walls we may conclude some keen-eyed cannoneer signalling to comrades on the greensward below: 'Yet another twenty-five yards, Ambrose . . . elevate the muzzle slightly. . . .' Fumes of sulphur lifting in chestnut and beech. . . .

A classical mind would dwell perhaps upon the Troyan walls where the old men sauntered, much occupied with the Achaean ships and with Helen's beauty. . . .

The wind falls a little, and birds are vocal everywhere. On the open lawn a freshet awakens a glittering spiral of leaves. The spiral flutters a moment, and droops at last; flakes of dim silver in the sun. Gravely, immutably, a bell tolls. It is time to be away. . . .

One enters the quiet, high-walled medieval lane beneath the point where masons are engaged in refacing Queen's College Library. Here the new stone gleams bright honey, in outline, as its architect planned it nearly two hundred and forty

years ago. They are reproducing the pediment eagle, and every statue at the base. . . .

. . . . .

In half a panic I remember my appointment with a don, and clatter up the bare treads of his staircase. The door admitting to his study, a bleak and ponderous structure, is closed. I knock. No answer. Knock again, and am almost impelled to go away when a slight movement from the interior reveals his presence. 'Ha, ha!' I consider, 'if persistence stands for anything, then you shall not elude me!' and rapping still more vigorously upon the panel await developments. . . .

He appears at once, distinct annoyance flushing his features. 'Can't you see the door 's closed?' he inquires pettishly. I stare rather blankly. What of that? 'However,' he grumbles, with an air of great concession, 'come in—come in!'

When I leave three minutes later I have been initiated into the mysteries of 'sporting one's oak'—and the proprieties of this self-imposed seclusion. . . .

### *Labour Club*

The Oxford Union Labour Club forgathers in the Friends' Meeting House, a lengthy room, admitting through a longish passage from the

High. 'Not a bad place to defend,' remarks D——, who has had some experience of warfare in other terms . . . down a long passage, therefore, and up into the room itself. Every available seat is occupied. The room cloudy with smoke. Almost everybody seems to be smoking. Undergraduettes—how they abominate this name!—constitute a fair minority. But is this audience exclusively Labour? A little knot of Ruskin men are vocal to our right. D——, however, points out ahead a Tory and a member of a well-known Tory family. A thick flecking of Indians and negroes also. At length the chairman reads over the minutes, inviting comment. 'Much too long,' bellows a voice from the rear—'*Much* too long'.

Mr. G. D. H. Cole, announced as 'the leading Socialist this university has produced', steps briskly forward, a slim figure, a little over middle-size, with dark though rapidly greying hair, high cheek bones, and a long and confident upper lip. He dominates, taut, sensitive, aggressive, speaking with an assurance, and a rapidity a trifle alien in this haunt of habitual drawl. His mind works so rapidly that one wonders vaguely what healthy synthesis is ever likely to emerge from so vivid a consideration of the economic-politico field. He does not hesitate to prophesy a Labour victory at the polls, and his policy in the event of

such a victory would be a transitional one. State acquirement of stock in the great financial concerns. He renounces his belief in the main power of the industrial arm, and finally makes an appeal for a rational approach to the problem.

The questions pour in. How will Mr. Cole deal with joint-stock banks? How will he placate the unions in those building and other schemes that are to swallow up the unemployed? How would he tackle the sabotage of Socialist policies by capitalistic forces? . . .

I leave disquieted—alone. A note of unreality prevails. Under the shadow of St. Mary's I conclude it something of a masquerade. I remembered Miss ——, indicated by D——, the daughter of a famous artist, her pale suave features half obscured by the constant cigarette—poseuse from tip to toe, in a setting of plus-foured dilettante. . . . The *Labour* Club? Anything you like, but not that. . . .

There is a picture somewhere of Zola standing upon a locomotive questing material for his novel, *La Bête Humaine*. He occupies the footplate, decorously hatted, bland in pince-nez, neat overcoat and spats. A walking-stick slants from hands loosely clasped behind his back, and there the amazing fellow lingers at the heart of things! I was reminded of that as I left the

Friends' Meeting House, and I wondered how these play-boys, these union arrivistes, would sustain the democratic thesis in a grimmer setting than that of Oxford. . . .

### *The Romantic*

After a sparsely attended lecture to-day I depart with my left-hand companion; the other two — total five with the lecturer — straggle behind.

*He.* We really must turn up after this to encourage the old buffer.

*I.* An act of grace?

*He.* It would be rather curious to discover how we four got together this morning—to trace our connections to this point—rather like the *Bridge of San Luis Rey,* you know.

*I.* That 's cheerful. What are you reading?

*He.* History. What have you been doing?

[*We pass at this moment a shop window in one of the main streets, where little piles of coal, dusted and befurbished, are arrayed in tiny baskets with a setting of ferns. I point silently. It seems so far away and long ago. . . .*

*Matriculation*

Matriculated this morning. The Dean sent a note around last night: would I meet him *subfusc* at 11 a.m. to-day? The Vice-Chancellor would then be at liberty to perform the ceremony. . . .

Steady rain all morning, breaking on the roadway like blown glass. *Subfusc* means dark suit, white collar and bow, cap, gown, etc. I had no dark socks, so I borrowed B——'s. And still it rained, so, conveniently, I crouched behind an umbrella. Off to college I went. . . .

In the absence of the Dean a deputy awaited to convey me to the Clarendon Buildings. The rain now hurried to a rising wind as we ascended the steps. The Corinthian pillars glistened with rain. It reached after us in the cool stone of the porch. Then we shook ourselves and entered a room. I signed a register. . . .

After a few minutes the Vice-Chancellor crossed the flags outside, preceded by a mace-bearer. We composed our features. He entered and bowed. I made a movement which was really a bob. After a few formalities he handed over a copy of the statutes. Then he hurried over a little Latin, and raised his cap. We bobbed again . . . withdrew . . . it was all over. . . .

Item: one gown, twelve and sixpence.

Item: one cap, six shillings.

*Theme*

At last! I have found a theme. He died a hundred years ago. He was Radical at a time when a plea for Universal Suffrage was an indictable offence. He was arrested for sedition, and convicted. He was one of the most prolific writers of his time. He was in the van of reform from the year of American Independence to the eve of the Reform Bill. He jostled cheek by jowl with Horne Tooke, Sir Francis Burdett, William Cobbett, Henry Hunt, and a hundred others. He was a progressive farmer in one of the most progressive agrarian counties in England. As a sailor he fought in the Seven Years' War. As an explorer he opened out an unknown section of the new world. As a soldier he had a lengthy militia term to his credit. As an architect he designed a gigantic naval temple. As the brother of a famous inventor he shared in the development of machinery. As an Industrial Revolutionist he set up a worsted factory. It is true that he threw good money after bad in the venture, but the investment placed him in the full flow of contemporary enterprise — in short, a most remarkable man—a figure well worthy to be written up. His name, Major John Cartwright. Will the Board of Studies approve? . . . If so, then he is mine. . . .

*Chanticleer*

I still awake each morning at five, and with the faintest consciousness of guilt await the dawn. This, I suppose, is the legacy of an eight hours allegiance to the alarm clock and the pithead buzzer, and here in this tranquil place after so many weeks of residence one is still sensible of the unfair advantage of the lie-a-bed. Is one very near to letting down one's own people? An hour ago in the back kitchens of Tollgate pans were 'cracking' with bacon, and later kettles spouting steam for the tea-bottles and mugs of the men-folk. Then invocatory whistles and buzzers: the deep bass of the steel-works bellowing to the tenor of the by-product plant, and the faint chorus of the distant town a prelude to the sharp call of the colliery—always two minutes after the hour.

Here in Oxford, about six o'clock, arises the subdued and almost secret swishing of the street brushes. It is quite dark when the sweepers begin. . . .

*Setting*

My room presents a rather attractive appearance. Over the mantelpiece hangs (the landlady's property) a portrait of a college don, dignified, austere. I have always some difficulty

in persuading new-comers that this is my grandfather. . . .

Then I have bought me an old German snowscape, a thing of sheer delight—vast perspective, full of engaging detail. My friend, O. S., has sent me Vermeer's 'Mill'. That hangs beside the door. I brought from Yorkshire 'The Old Dutch Church in Sleepy Hollow', a Guerin nocturne in lavender and pale gold. In addition I have framed two broadsides, one Whitman, and the other Byron's lovely *So we 'll go no more a-roaming.*

The curtains and cushions are of indigo, with a young green branching where at intervals are set bright parokeets. The walls are a flush of pale strawberry. Across the ceiling straggles a black old oak beam. . . .

### *Supervisor*

So the subject is approved. I am to write the life of the Major, his place in Radical and contemporary movements. My supervisor is a Balliol man.

I see my tutor by appointment, write an essay on some general aspect of the political scene since it is all part of the background, and discuss the subject with him.

It is all very leisurely and charming. I enter, essay in hand, he asks will I smoke, whereupon he

sinks in a deep chair and lights up. We discuss my health, he asks about M.; we compare topography—Yorkshire with that of Sussex, from whence he comes; chat a little about pictures; anything almost but the subject matter of the eighteenth century, when—lo! imperceptibly we have drifted into a consideration of Shelburne's political faith. It is all so intimate and engaging. I depart with an invitation to tea, and an appalling number of books to read. . . .

OCT. 21. *The Master—and Peace*

In Manchester College, Arlosh Hall, upon the shallow platform there, and brought hither by the University Peace Group, stands the Master of Balliol (Mr. A. D. Lindsay). A lilac-shaded lamp filters a misty aura about his good-natured and rather pugnacious features. There is a touch of negligence in the slightly crumpled collar he wears. He shifts restlessly behind the desk, and appears not altogether at ease with his subject—Pacifism. Rightly or wrongly he conveys the impression that he is thinking his way through the subject for the first time. How painfully he blazes the trail. . . . Hack! Hack! . . . where do we find ourselves at the moment? A little lost? That touch of negligence in his attire sits not inapposite . . .

One is able to gather (at length) that he is not an extreme pacifist—perhaps no pacifist at all. Nor militarist either. He is too supremely a philosopher, qualification qualified, ever to trumpet The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon!

In the hall itself the hungry sheep—three-quarters women students—look up and are not fed. They would feel impelled in the last resort to take a ticket for *somewhere*, if only for Tooting; but the Master gnaws the nail of doubt in the very midst. A disillusioned quality pervades the questions. The speaker is firmly but mournfully repudiated by two officials of the Peace League, who announce non-coöperation in any future war whatever.

Later I met B——, who asked me to stroll around to look at his pictures. He was very scornful about the meeting. 'What do you think of this for a political creed?' he asked. Over his shoulder I read:

> Seek you a way to shift these dolts
> That hang about your path,
> Like sleek envenomed snakes that mock
> Your futile fits of wrath?
>
> I 'll tell you what you need, my friends,
> If you seek what you say:
> A pistol and pistol shot,
> And that 's the only way!

B—— shook a finger vibrant with revolt.

It was raining when he let me out. The faint lamplight speared the glistening pavement of the quad, and our feet slid upon the flat, sodden leaves. He walked down to my rooms, eager for conversation. I doubt if in all his life he has ever touched a pistol. . . .

OCT. 31. *English Club*

Heard Harold Acton, a university 'wit'—very disappointed. His paper had only a thin, brittle quality. He is the kind of man, one feels, who would write poems about himself in the bath. . . .

NOV. 5. *Gunpowder Treason*

PITY THE POOR GUY . . . A PENNY FOR THE GUY . . .

Outside Worcester, Balliol, Trinity, linger slight deputations of the hopeful, muffled, like the effigy they carry, to the eyes. The earth, ice-bound, rings beneath the tread. Breath smokes in air. High jinks, one hears, to-night. . . .

Later—8 p.m. In the Cornmarket a fluid mob swirls around the patient figures of a few police officers. Everybody seems to have turned out, jamming the thoroughfare in great good humour. From time to time a rocket wanders over the house-tops, and lower, in the crowd, a squib

explodes pettishly with a handful of sparks. Heavier material, one supposes, is being held in reserve. Someone tosses a firework beneath a policeman. He shifts an inch as it detonates, staring intently at some point in the press. Will he make a dash? A colleague advances, and before the newcomer, hovering at a safe distance, an undergraduate begins saluting solemnly time and again. The officer gazes through him, and at last the young gentleman is carried away in the swirl, still saluting like an automaton.

Autos creep painfully. A Bengal Light flaming from an omnibus floods all the range of tossing heads and darkened shops, and even the squat eleventh-century tower, with deep satanic fire. A tremendous detonation sets the girls squealing. In high windows silhouetted figures watch the fun. Already the air is overburdened with powder fumes. . . .

The press thickens. One needs to bring an elbow into play to make progress. A number of men, hanging to the rear of a car, draw it to a standstill. Cat and mouse, they allow the vehicle to run a yard or so, before they stop it once again. At last they concede release. Men are clambering on limousines, slipping off at the advent of the police. One pedestrian thrusts his hand into the driver's seat of a motor lorry, with cool audacity withdraws a tin of petrol, and sets it on the

roadway. The driver blasphemes, springs out to retrieve his property. Too late. The man is lost in the crowd. . . .

Bang! A glitter of stars against the upper stories of the shops. The silhouettes cower. Rings of men with arms interlocked charge at the denser portions of the crowd. At one point a frenzied figure rages around, tailing a few others. 'Taan! Taan!' he bawls, 'taan boys!' Town and gown—at last? But there is no real encounter. The freshet of brawling goes, and one must turn to the story books for a repetition of the issue. . . .

There is a sudden burst of cheering. What now? Through the haze a tall figure emerges, begowned and capped—the Proctor and his bulldogs. He pauses, apprehending a rather flustered young gentleman with a grave, serene courtesy. 'Your name, please—your college?' He lifts his cap disposedly and accosts another. A cracker explodes beneath the skirt of his gown, but he is unmoved. A man of iron. . . .

There are further culprits in the Broad. Along the Turl he gathers a lengthy entourage. 'For he 's a jolly good fellow—he 's a jolly good fellow.' He disappears Oriel way. . . .

In the Cornmarket things have grown much livelier. 'Town! Come on, Town!' A man upon the roof of a vehicle finds his ankle gripped by a

policeman on the road. The undergraduate looks down. 'Get off, my man.' 'You're coming down,' announces the policeman. 'Do you know I can have you summoned for common assault?' rejoins the undergrad. Contemptuously: 'Let go, my man!' And so on. . . .

All highly diverting. One returns to lodgings, however, with the uneasy feeling that the 'high spirits' of a university displayed in Cornmarket transported to the setting of a northern coalfield would bear a somewhat different interpretation: 'Disgraceful Fracas in Mining Village. Police Defied'?

'My man!' indeed. . . .

### *Background*

In the Bod, reading Wyvill and odd eighteenth-century pamphlets. There was, one supposes, 'a land of hollyhocks and country houses; a land where, at night, in thorny and sequestered by-paths, you would meet masqueraders going to a ball in their sedans, and the rector steering homeward by the light of his lantern; a land of the windmill, and the west wind, and the flowering hawthorne with a little scented letter in the hollow of its trunk. . . .' And that's the period *à la* Austin Dobson (most popular in the 'nineties):

Patience or prudence—what you will,
Some prefix faintly fragrant still
As those old musky scents that fill
Our grandam's pillows;
And for her youthful portrait take
Some long waist child of Hudson's make,
Stiffly at ease beside a lake
With swans and willows.

Ah, hum! There was also a vastly serious and grimly realistic century of seamen eating rotten biscuits on account of unscrupulous peculators (weevils in the oldest biscuits, and big white maggots, not so sour to the taste as weevils, in the others). Influence. The property owner, turning out those tenants who did not vote as he wished. The stinking prisons; and definite 'orders'—upper and lower. (Place, the tailor, conserving a tiny library in secret lest the knowledge of this should alienate his wealthy customers, conveying the impression that with so goodly a company of books he was presuming beyond his station!) The lash for backs, both male and female; a halter for the petty thief. Ruddy, brawling, Hogarthian. . . .

Enough for three hours! Away with County Meetings! Back to your shadows, prevaricating, equivocating Wyvill!

NOV. 19. *'Yatscombe'*

B—— escorts me to tea at the Murrays'. The professor is resting, and does not appear immediately, but we are received by Lady Mary. . . .

At length he comes, of whom it is written 'a spectacled student, slight, thin haired, sweet voiced', . . . with 'a sense of humour . . . intellectual and subtle'. Whether 'the lifelong struggle of a benevolent temperament and a high conscience against impulses of inhuman ridicule and fierce impatience has set up a chronic strain which has visibly wrecked his constitution', one cannot say. Certainly a gracious address and a gentle irony in conversation sit strangely with the dour, almost Calvinistic aspect of the man as one remembers him in the chair at a League of Nations demonstration. I remember making a sketch for M., in which a couple of firm strokes denoted eyebrows, and another, decidedly firm, for the grim mouth.

To-night with humour, intellectual and subtle, he surveys the contemporary scene. We talk about payment to literary men (he recalls his old *Speaker* days), bowler hats in Turkey; Mr. A. J. Cook, Mr. H. W. Nevinson. . . .

Lady Mary rules the table, and interposes often, with an alert Labour eye. She is, from a long tradition of public service, interested in the

depressed the areas, in forms of copartnership, particularly mining. . . .

NOV. 20. *The Summons*

A letter from the Proctor on the usual printed slip, announcing that he wishes to see Mr. Dataller at 9.45 in the morning. Wherefore? I turn the paper over, scan the writing, make a rigorous searching of late events, and deciding that there is nothing in my record heinous enough to warrant an interview with authority, I slip down to see B——, who has just entered. He also tears open an envelope, and, noting the contents, emits a low whistle.

'What is it?' I ask.

'My God!'

'Well?'

'The Proctor!' He drops into a chair dangling problem picture—the slip loose in his fingers.

'Is it likely to be very serious?'

'Don't know'—gloomily.

'Because——' and I present my own summons.

'Ah, let me see.' A light leaps in his eyes.

I hand it over and he peruses it in silence. 'Wonder what it 's all about?'

'What is it likely to be about?'

He makes a whimsical grimace. 'Drunk and disorderly? Blotto? I don't know though . . .

it may be just a small matter of lodgings. We must wait and see. Nine forty-five. . . .'

NOV. 21. *Hoax*

At twenty to ten we sally out—*sub fusc*, B—— swinging his cap by the tassel. 'Mysterious business,' he broods. 'Can't think what to make of it.'

Other figures, gowned and capped, are streaming beyond the Memorial: half a dozen or more men turning in from St. Giles. At the corner the Broad leaps in the vision as a sweep of thickening groups similarly attired. There is an undertone of conversation, an occasional laugh as we draw in. A solitary figure scampers up the steps of the Clarendon building. But what of the others? Obviously one Proctor cannot grapple with so consequential a body of men. . . .

Undergraduates for the most part are watching a plumber mending a pane of glass on the frontage where there are one or two broken windows. Now a fire engine glides through the crowd and halts before the entrance. There is a ragged cheer; but it 's off almost immediately, with another cheer for benediction. When will the Proctor begin—and how? Where is he at this moment? Biting his nails behind that façade of forbidding windows? . . .

'Not much of a hoax?' A voice lifts somewhere, and we smile faintly. 'It's all over. Come along. Shall we have coffee?'

The newspaper has it:

Flying squads of masked students broke the windows of the Clarendon Buildings (the offices of the proctors), fire engines and escapes were called, telephone lines were disconnected, and hundreds of students stormed the steps of the building. Dozens of police assembled in Broad Street shortly after nine a.m., but made little attempt to interfere with the riotous students.

The demonstration was arranged as a protest against the policy of the Proctors, who have recently been enforcing the university rules with, it is alleged, unusual severity.

The disturbances began at about midnight, when motor cars dashed up to the steps of the Clarendon Buildings.

The raiders found proctors still on the premises, and imprisoned them by locking the gates.

A score of masked students threw whitewash-filled bottles, smashed most of the windows, and did considerable damage to the interior of the offices.

Then they ran back to their cars and drove off at breakneck speed.

All marks which might distinguish the cars had been removed. . . .

Later, about a thousand students swarmed into Broad Street.

They had been summoned to the proctors' offices by notices which were very good imitations of the official ones sent out by the proctors to students they wish to interview. The hour named for the 'interview' was 9.45 a.m. . . .

The students yelled: 'Down with the proctors!' and 'Down with the gown rule!'

When the demonstration was at its height fire engines

dashed up. A message had been sent that fire had broken out in Broad Street.

The arrival of the engine was greeted by loud cheering.

Students rushed up the steps of the building, with the evident intention of storming the offices, but the 'bulldogs' held the doors. . . .

Ahem!

BON MOT

'Oxford?—the Latin Quarter of Cowley!'

NOV. 22. *The Whig*

SIR OSWALD MOSLEY, BART., M.P.

The title, it would appear, clings tenaciously as a birth-mark. He is up to-night to support a motion in the Presidential debate: 'That this house approves of the main principles of Socialism'. The candidates for the Presidency lead—and woe betide their chances if they do not scintillate—while Sir Oswald Mosley, Bart., M.P., and his opponent, a Tory lawyer, will follow. Mosley brings his wide smile, displaying teeth, to the seat 'gainst the wall behind the dispatch boxes. His Tory opponent, a man with thinnish sleek black hair, toys with the long black ribbon of his eyeglasses. He is quite at ease. He knows his brief, this advocate.

But Mosley?—the ci-devant aristo? He is not

an Oxford man; but few can be more sensible of the glorious cloud of witnesses upon these walls. When his turn comes the bronzed face moves forward without embarrassment, and in a pleasant deeply-toned voice he opens his case. His gestures are economical. From time to time he splays his open hands across his chest, not without a touch of melodrama. 'If you are born into a dog-fight,' he declares, 'any sane man will take steps not to be the under-dog, and the only way not to be the under-dog is through personal wealth. That is not inconsistent with suggesting the opinion that, on the whole, it would be better to stop the dog-fight and have a rational and organized world.' What conceivable difference is there in the position of a man employed by a big modern concern, employed by a private trust, or by the State itself? To-day we have all the evils of state bureaucracy and none of the advantages of public control. He delivers a cut at the 'lackeys' of the Tory party. When he reverts to the odium poured upon his name because he has taken his stand with the people, he appears genuinely moved. He recalls to the House the line of family representation in the Commons, and reminds his hearers that during the struggle for political liberty, culminating in the Reform Bill, great names had been enlisted in the leadership of the popular movement. 'As I sit in the House

of Commons nothing is more tragic than to see men bearing famous names dumb behind the ranks of big business.' So the popular movement in the economic struggle calls for its newer leaders, and why should one not look for these from the class that took the field in the Reform movements of last century? . . .

After a while a section of the House begins to tire, drumming steady impatient feet. At last he resumes his seat, and the Tory advocate opens. 'I have been waiting a long time;' and when laughter has subsided, 'I am a little irked,' he continues, 'at seeing opposite to me in the House of Commons men who toil not, neither do they spin, who glory in titles which they have not earned, and who come down here and accuse me of being a bloated aristocrat, a product of an effete and out-of-date system' . . .

Undoubtedly the birth-mark clings. . . .

NOV. 24. *Excursion*

Pushed out towards the Chilterns. A breeze strains languidly after a great gale last night—many trees uprooted, and the thatching of cottages and barns teased and torn in every direction. Watch for a while a couple arranging a tarpaulin across a ragged hole in a cottage roof. Here is an

occupation as old as the shire. The tarpaulin flaps violently, tears away freakishly from time to time, until foot by foot it is bound into position, and there remains like a bellying sail across the end of the house. . . .

*Catechism*

There are five cinemas within a stone's throw of Carfax crossroads. Do these linger desolate, echoing and cobweb-festooned, during the enlivened hum of the academical year?

They do not.

Does Hollywood languish unavailingly before the massed allurement of Theology, Law, Medicine, Literæ Humaniores, Modern History; English Language and Literature; Medieval, Modern, and Oriental Languages; Physical and Biological Sciences; Philosophy, Politics, and Economics; the Parks, the Union, the Isis, and the 'George'?

Hollywood does not.

Does undergraduate seating (and a goodly portion of that belonging to citizens also) appear well patronized at almost any stage of the performance?

It does.

Is an average attendance of undergraduates greater per head of population than (shall we say?) that of Brightside, Sheffield?

It is.
Much greater?
Much.

. . . .

*Deans, statisticians, gentlemen bewailing pastimes of the mighty uncultivated, please note.*

NOV. 25. *Poet*

Blunden came last night. In appearance he is middle height, with slightly bowed shoulders, and ample dark hair falling loosely over his brow. Beneath the brilliant lights of the lecture room his pale, bony, clean-shaven features—the eyelids lowered, tired perhaps—strike poignantly.

He talked about modern poetry and its responsibilities. Briefly, modern poets were shirking the great issues—political, scientific, industrial. They dallied with footling themes, whereas the giants of the past caught up religion, astronomy—quoting Dr. Watts and Shelley.

He was in Japan when the General Strike took place. The eyes of the whole world—particularly those of the East—were set upon this country. Japanese coolies waiting in the Tokyo cinema queues were discussing it. An historic situation, yet no contemporary poet had deemed the subject worthy of his genius. Was he afraid to court experience of these things? . . .

I had no question to ask. One man, jealous for the credit of E. E. Cummings, put in a plea for new forms. 'Yes,' said Blunden, 'I am ready to welcome new forms if I can see work of any worth. I can find none at present. . . .

NOV. 30. *A New Society*

DEAR SIR,

This Society stands for independence of judgment rather than a narrow uncritical party loyalty. It is not enough for this Society that a man should think patriotism an unfaltering acquiescence in the opinions of some one party, which cannot be infallible. It is not enough that selfishness or ignorance should prevent him of what is best for his country himself.

This Society stands for the propagation of a sense of proportion in national and international affairs. It appeals to that large body which thinks that it is possible to see two sides of the same political question—a body whose members have in fact joined all three of our political clubs, and form the greater part of each of them.

This Society holds that the politics of this country stand indebted as much to the intelligent citizen as to the politician.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has consented to advance his views . . . in the Randolph Hotel. . . .

. . .

G. K. C. sits, a cigar between his dumpy fingers, his head half cocked upon the flow of witticism. 'We hope that Mr. Chesterton will throw his whole weight——' and he chuckles loudly and generously, as though in the act of hearing the joke for the first time.

At last he is on his feet, releasing a cloud of paradox and epigram. He opens with the Regency buck, and concludes with the peasant proprietor, and all the questions are inconsequential as the address.

'Is it for personal reasons that you are against large-scale productions?'

Up he looms. 'No, sir. I look upon myself as one of those monsters or abortions brought forward in our time to warn people how far consolidation might go.'

'Does Mr. Chesterton regard Napoleon as a greater personality than Pitt?'

'Yes, sir. I am very much afraid that if Napoleon had come to London the English roads might have been made straight—I like them crooked. Also I think that our extraordinarily inconvenient system of coinage—I am very fond of it—might have been abandoned for the decimal system.'

'Since most figures and movements have appealed to the past, to whom does Jesus Christ appeal?'

'To his Father—God!'

But another new society is floated. . . .

*Maiden Speech*

There was still room. Through the glass panels of the swing-doors he could see that only half the

House had assembled. He entered, and took a seat to the left of the President's chair. Cumnor was here already, voluble as usual. 'Making a few noises to-night, son?'

'A few.'

'First try?' suggested Cumnor, though he knew all about it—then, 'That 's all right. You 'll be as right as rain.' His eyes ranged the slowly filling gallery. 'Nice one over there,' he continued, nodding to a point where a slim blonde was edging with some difficulty to a desirable place. 'Ha–ha. . . .'

One listened patiently. Cumnor often broke out like that. 'She stumbled as I spoke. Human nature being what it is!'

Idiot! One turned to mark the slowly filling hall. Men straggled in, gowns over shoulders, tucked under arms, or screwed scarf-like around necks. Cool, sufficiently casual, they collected an order paper and sprawled upon the benches opposite. And why not, indeed? There was, after all, nothing particularly terrible about the Union. Numbers of men would speak to-night, and great crowds spoke every term. In any case the Union leaders were far from brilliant. 'The Union 's on bad times.' Where had he heard that expression? In the Liberal Club? 'You should have heard the man we had in last year. He wanted to be president—sadly. He 'd take down

all the pictures in his room to practise speaking. 'Spect he was clever in his way. He used to speak extempore in the Union; but I never heard him.' Thus the landlady. . . . Around, a cloud of witnesses, portraits of members mostly famous and now dead, looked down. Four busts ran against the farther wall. Someone had thrust a folded gown upon the head of the end marble, that of a Liberal Prime Minister, where poised in mute judgment he surveyed the throng. . . .

The president swept in, the other officials with brisk stepping at his heels. They had been at dinner, and were late as usual; but the secretary, fastidiously brisk, ran through the minutes, and the librarian, with a scolding note, announced the weekly list of books. The preliminaries were over. . . .

When the debate opened it was still curious to watch the leaders, in the black and white of evening dress, darting to a point beside the dispatch box, their voices charged with a stock parliamentary quality, their gestures crude and unfinished. They pressed elbows upon the dispatch box in the House of Commons manner. Still stranger to hear these youthful voices booming dramatically on behalf of causes they had been reading up in the Union library. Economic Reform? What did these people know about it, anyway? Adequately housed, well fed, and

with money to squander, the pathos with which they were seeking to invest their voices resounded emptily—sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

The speeches were not without wit. 'Unemployment is not a new difficulty. It is pleasing to think that there was a good deal of unemployment in this country a hundred years ago.' And every one laughed. Cumnor laughed. It was the sort of thing the Union seemed to enjoy. Well, he would strike cleanly home into the real heart of the problem. With burning sentences he would illumine these dark places of ignorance and prejudice. The first phrase ran easily: 'Mr. President, sir——'

Time flew. The twenty-minute speeches of the leaders had never seemed so scanty. Alarmingly, the gilded finger of the clock at the other end of the hall switched an hour away, and now the tellers, also austere in evening dress, were at their separate stations by the double-leafed door —'ayes' to the right, and 'noes' to the left.

The president, consulting his list, called upon a freshman. Unembarrassed, the member rose from the ruck of the opposing benches, and spoke with a hard, unimaginative Tory efficiency. There was nothing that required an answer. 'I 'm going,' said Cumnor, entering a stream of departing members. 'Bye-bye.' There was a slight hitch, for the president had dropped his

pencil, then with a clarion note came to announcement. . . .

From the dispatch box the House assumed an unusual perspective, a thinnish sprinkling of faces. But the first words were out before one realized. 'Mr. President, sir—In order to reach the heart of this problem . . .' Were these piping notes his own? How oddly the thin sound fell across the silence. . . . 'We must imagine ourselves therefore in the place of those who are toiling in the industrial areas . . . if this is true, then this is—this is . . . this is . . .'

To sweep away the first sheet of the tiny pile of notes was easy enough; but why on earth weren't the sentences consecutive? He pushed the second page aside . . . the third . . . and fourth . . . and desperately returned to the first. The House awaited in a silence that throbbed like a myriad drum-beats. What next? What point was it he was trying to make? 'But——' He bridged the chasm of silence with the word as he lifted his head, only to encounter the ex-Prime Minister's stony eyeballs still surmounted by the black cap of judgment. 'But——' again. Yet one simply couldn't go on repeating this word—it was so perfectly ridiculous! . . . 'Human nature being what it is . . .' That was Cumnor's phrase. Again one crouched above the damning obscurity of those notes, until at last a fertile

sentence emerged, and when with a face like flame he recovered his seat, there was a single, ironical clap. . . .

This was the end. Conscious of his neighbour's curious eyes he sank to the bench. Already the president was announcing the name of the succeeding speaker. 'Mr. President, sir——'

Four speeches drifted by. Might one conveniently steal away? He took up his gown and sauntered down the floor of the House. Clumsily he tripped. Well, what matter? . . . things couldn't be worsened anyhow. He swung the door open upon a rush of damp night air. A slight rain was falling, and the path to the gateway glistened dimly in the light of the library windows. Still, the rain was welcome as the open night. Then, with a sudden wrinkling of brows he remembered that, though opposing the motion, he had passed out before their very eyes through the 'aye' section of the doorway, the reverse order in which he had wished to vote. That above all things! He sighed, whistling disgustedly, and, his gown trailing upon the sodden leaves, he turned into the street. . . .

### *Back Bench Union Speech*

'I think the country is in rather a bad way. I think something ought to be done. I don't

think the Labour people have much grasp of sound principle. I . . . I . . . I think that is all I have to say.'

### *Ghosts*

'Look at all these houses standing up like this,' said J—— as we left Rewley House an hour ago. He did not clarify his statement as he waved a hand towards the dark façade. I observed that only the upper windows were illuminated. Did these shelter the bona-fide students of whom we hear so much, the true seekers after knowledge for whom the university was set up? Few have ever glimpsed them in the clear light of noonday. They are legend, spectres on a plane of their own. *Jig-a-jig-jig* . . . a jazz rhythm beats across the darkened square. Not here. . . .

The nearest approach is perhaps about the Camera of an evening. The traffic roars along the High—you may take the high road at Carfax for London or Gloucester, Portsmouth and Southampton, Birmingham and the north—and outside the glittering bay windows of the 'Mitre' a limousine bespeaks a standard of wealth rather than one of culture. But turn the angle of Brasenose, and in the shadow of St. Mary's cross the cobbled reach to the great library. A string of cycles, more than unusually frail in the misty

air, depend upon the railings at the entrance. You cannot be too certain of these. It is a veritable haunt of shadows. The lines of the Bodleian itself melt in the shadows. There are ghosts walking. Newman treads the pulpit of St. Mary's, and Johnson clatters over the cobbles, meditating ruefully upon a fine of twopence for non-attendance at lectures that he considers are not worth a penny.

### *Economical Reform*

I button up my coat in the Codrington protectively, first against the chill, and second at the bleak pages of a volume of Parliamentary Debates.

Enter Mr. Burke:

> Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There, the bleak winds, there 'Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud', howling through the vacant lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guardrooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants—the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane; the stern Edwards and fierce Henrys—who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity and the melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. When this tumult subsides, a dead and still more frightful silence, would reign in this desert, if every now and then the tacking of hammers did not announce that these constant attendants upon the courts in all ages, jobs, were still alive. . . .

It 's worth a bunch of nipped fingers to encounter *that* !

*Overheard in the Broad*

*First Undergrad.* 'I suppose he has a sense of humour?'

*Second Undergrad.* 'I can't really see how a sense of humour is of any real value. I——'

*These Charming People*

*Hostess.* 'Do you know Stroud, Mr. Jones?'

*Mr. Jones.* 'Er . . . no. But my people stayed there a month last year.'

*Hostess.* 'I thought it a rather charming little place.'

*Mr. Jones.* 'Really!'

*Hostess.* 'I fancied you might have been familiar with it.'

*Mr. Jones.* 'Not at all.' He bites a sandwich.

*Hostess.* 'You see, I 'm a West country woman.'

*Mr. Jones.* 'Really!'

*Hostess.* 'I suppose you motor a good deal, Mr. Robinson?'

*Mr. Robinson.* 'Yes.' (Pronounced 'Yaars.')

*Hostess.* 'Do you know the Lake District?'

*Mr. Robinson.* 'Oh, yes, I was there three years ago.'

*Hostess.* 'So charming.'

*Mr. Robinson.* 'Yes.'

*Hostess* (*to me*). 'I suppose you 're Labour?'

*R. D.* 'Left wing.'

*Hostess.* 'Dear me. I 'm afraid you haven't much in common with Mr. Prinkpert. . . .' Mr. Dataller glances at Mr. Prinkpert. . . .

After about half an hour of this, Mr. Jones perceives his wrist watch with an air of intense surprise (the sly dog has been eyeing it for the last twenty minutes). He rises. 'I 'm afraid I must go.' Everybody stands.

*Mr. Jones.* 'Thanks awfully.'

*Mr. Robinson.* 'Thanks frightfully.'

Mr. Prinkpert shakes hands with a faint bow. . . .

## *Imperial Politics*

*Indian Student.* 'I have three charges to lay against the Indian Civil Service. The first is, that it isn't Indian, the second that it isn't civil, and the third that they 're not servants.'

. . . . . .

R—— confided to-day that he was writing a book, a shortish thing, rather like the *Bridge of San Luis Rey.* A very long short story, or perhaps a short novel.

This is the fourth novel this term. Every Oxford man plans one at some point of his residence.

DEC. 5. *Vacation*

The last week of term. Proceed, grey morning, and doubly welcome! you uninviting rooms of ——. The fire burns strongly with a flame as straight as a sword. As the lecturer enters he flashes a glance around—how many? 'But four? Ah! With an aspect of stoic resignation he passes to his desk, tossing his cap upon the mantelpiece as he does so. There is still a little to say, however. . . . 'Always study the watermarks in documents,' but 'there is a breath of learning about sealing-wax—from which I hope you may be preserved. . . .'

The last week! Already one grips the handle of the carriage door. The luggage swings in easy—easy—the station falls behind . . . not yet. . . .

'A Queen of England writing to the King of Spain said: "I kiss your hands!"' Was this a mark of subservience? Indeed no. It was a natural form of greeting, peculiar to the times. . . .

But the mind wanders. Above, a pale map announces DIE GRIECHISCHE WELT. There is the toe of Italy set in the thin wash of the Mediterranean—the fretted tassel of Greece. Switzerland also, and in Switzerland, Mürren, without a doubt. At one point in the High one remembers a little group throwing off conversation. . . . Mürren! . . . Mürren! So be it: the ice and

the mountains for the group on the High; but for those who are so minded the long slope of the valley, the tonic northern wind, the good coal fires, and all those voices redolent of heart and strength. . . .

'Many of Cromwell's letters were forged in the eighteenth century. . . .' Well, well. . . .

DEC. 7. *Home*

M. meeting on the station platform—and then Main Street, with the familiar clip-clop of clogs. I catch the afternoon shift leaving work. Here is L—— hardly recognizable in his pit dirt.

'Haa do, lad?' He grins flashing teeth.

'Haa do?'

He passes on, his pit pants flapping loosely against his legs. Clip-clop! Clip-clip-clip! . . .

The colliery wheels into sight—the old constellation in the valley. The pulleys are hidden, but with broken string and cluster, the pithead lamps are glittering: here in the towering lamp room; there in the steam-hung engine house; yonder where the screens loom like the works of a Mississippi river boat. The boiler fires burn with a deeper glow. On the platform itself, beneath the powerful overhead lamps, the onsetters trample on inky shadows. . . .

JAN. *Battels*

Battels invaded my northern fastness this morning—a reminder that there is still a college gateway and an office beyond.

DR.

University Dues.
College Dues.
Establishment Charges:
Room Rent, Rates, and Taxes.
Service.
Buttery and Store Room.
Kitchen.
Coals and Faggots.
Electric Light and Gas.
Library Subscription.
Telephone.
Bicycle Rent.
Baths.
Damage Account.
General Damage Account.
Fines.
Laundry.
Rent and Depreciation of Furniture.

Extraordinary Depreciation.
Tuition.
J.C.R. Account and Subscription.
Club Subscriptions.
Carriage Account.
Arrears.

The charges upon this form are much more varied than those on a miner's pay ticket—which is saying a good deal.

'Gentlemen who do not pay their battels at or before the specified time will find themselves crossed at the Buttery, Stores, Kitchen, and J.C.R.'

So that 's that. P—— was telling me that his gate bill alone for last term was fifteen shillings. Is this extraordinary?

JAN. 28. *The Gloomy Dean*

As black as a crow he stands before that boiled-shirt façade, cawing with a definitely Oxford accent; but, as he lifts his head at last, revealing black hair brushed from a point upon the forehead, pouched eyes, pert nose, shrewish mouth, another image persists. Mephisto in apron and gaiters? Hardly. Something Dickensian perhaps? Again, with inclined head he crouches

over his manuscript, and again a Dickensian resemblance hovers . . . can it be Quilp, the solicitous one? Quilp with an Oxford drawl? . . .

He pauses pretty frequently, and sometimes, though not often, pauses to amplify extempore. He is not at ease, however, in such moments. He appears a trifle lost without his paper. . . .

He has come up to discuss 'The Future of Democracy', and he informs us that there are catch phrases of politics which we elevate into eternal truths, and perpetuate as obstacles to the progress of our children. Under democracy, he states, we are beginning to see an enormous parasitic class, whose ideal is idleness while battening on the rates and taxes. There are a great many who might work and won't (he indicates, one supposes, the *lower classes*!), and there are a great many who might emigrate and won't. No other country does so much for its 'I-won't-works' as we do. (Laughter.)

Girls enter, and squat upon the floor of the main gangway. The Dean proceeds:

Intelligence tests carried out in America a few years ago showed that 47 per cent of the population were below the mental age of thirteen. (Laughter.) He gives details of the intelligence investigation. (Loud and continued laughter, during which the Dean laughs also.) If the same questions were put to the British population? . . .

Democracy has steadily lost prestige during the last thirty years. The House of Commons is really past praying for. (Laughter.) 'I am sometimes asked by a Radical whether I approve of single-chamber government. I say "Yes" —but he will not ask me which chamber I wish to abolish.' (Laughter.) As for reform one would favour a certain number of members elected to represent different interests. . . . If the House of Commons were reformed in this way . . .

Questions come rather slowly at first, since the chairman has remarked that on account of the Dean's deafness, questioners should advance along the hall a little towards the platform. A little later the provision is amended to: 'Members of the audience may put questions from their places, and I will transmit them to the Dean'.

'What would be the average age of the Dean's proposed Senate?' This is transmitted to the Dean, and he laughs heartily. 'I really hadn't thought about the age of the Senate. Perhaps I might say in the words of the proverb: "The young would bring their zeal, the middle-aged their prudence, the old their wisdom."'

'Would the Dean reserve the bishops in his Senate?'

The Dean laughs. 'I would. A very desirable addition.'

'The Dean has suggested that Russia was captured and controlled by a small predatory body. Were not the British possessions in India acquired in the same fashion?'

The Dean does not laugh. He does not answer.

'The Dean suggested a dearth of professional representation in the House of Commons. Is it not a fact that they are tremendously over-represented? What about the back benches of the Tory party?'

The Dean rises slowly. 'I only said that there was no constituency where the commercial classes can elect their own representative as such.' He halts indecisively, still standing. Will he venture a further word? Yes? No? Yes? . . . No. He drops heavily in his seat. He does not laugh.

'Would the Dean include Trade Union Leaders in his Senate as well as Captains of Industry?'

'I suppose if Trade Unions wished to elect their representatives, those representatives would enter the House. There would be certain Mr. Cooks, I suppose. The fewer the better.'

'What would be the size of this proposed Senate?'

The Dean shakes his head a little petulantly. 'I really haven't thought about the details. I . . .' His mouth tightens.

'Is not the Dean growing rather tired of these questions?'

The Dean is not required to answer . . . but he does not laugh.

JAN. 30. *Humbert Wolfe*

A slightly tilted head. It is a heavy head with a burden of jet-black hair. His features blend Henry Irving and George Eliot. His voice is deep and pleasing, but with no great range. He tilts his head to the other angle, as though the weight of it is a somewhat weary thing. . . .

'Each year we are told that poetry died last year, or perhaps some years ago, when the mourner's last book was published. That poetry is unpopular need not be proved. . . .' Over tilts the head. . . .

'Why the general reader tries to fit the glass slipper on the vast and shapeless foot of the latest best-seller is not for the moment the issue. The fact remains that he does.' The head tilts back again. . . .

'By the road of prose you may evade life, but the way is long and harsh to the foot. It is only poetry which has the swift power of magic.' The heavy head sags. . . .

'The long cool sentence, slowly and amply

filling the page, is loved more readily than the broken rhythm of verse, with Puck patting the ass's head of capital letters at the beginning of each line. . . .' His gaze quests the ceiling now. . .

. . . . .

Presently he suffers a slow bombardment: Rabindranath Tagore, translations, the elimination of capitals in verse. One man wishes to know why the poet wants a general reader. 'The reason,' answers Mr. Wolfe, 'is that the poetry, if it is good poetry, only does half, and the general reader does the other half; and because the poet only says half of what he means. To twenty different readers a good poem means twenty different things.'

'Is the reason for the reputed breach between poetry and the public, that this is an age which, just as it dislikes tragedy, does not want to understand life?'

'It is a tired age,' says Mr. Wolfe. 'It is up to your generation to put back the interest and the mind which are almost impossible to those who fought in the war—or outside. That is the most terrifying experience mankind has ever gone through. It dried up the blood and brain and bone of all who were concerned in it.'

'Do expensive limited editions help the poets?'

'No, but they keep the poets!'

I put a question: 'Does Mr. Wolfe believe that the decay of religion accounts in some measure for a dearth of contemporary poets?'

'No, sir!' says Mr. Wolfe. . . .

FEB. *The Nationalist*

His dark liquid eyes hover plaintively over tea and chocolate biscuits in D——'s room. He bears a well known Indian name, and his father (communicates D——, not without appropriate awe) employs a private orchestra of his own. What D—— has in mind is the assembly of strings at the New Oxford Picture House.

He is much interested in mining conditions; but what has really happened is, that we are regaled willy-nilly to a first-hand review of the Indian situation. He delivers staccato comment, pausing often with a swift challenge of the eyes, disarmingly reproachful. What is he saying? . . .

He lights a cigarette. The British policy in India has always followed a course of divide and conquer, the Government supporting sometimes one faction, sometimes another, with no other end in view save that of fomenting unrest and perpetuating the ancient animosities. Evidence? He waves a coffee-coloured, presupposing hand.

Ah! if you knew where to look for it! The British newspapers purvey only selected material. *The Times* correspondents what they are able to glean from Anglo-Indians. The *Manchester Guardian*? Where are the cotton interests? Tell me! Tell me!

'Tell me! . . .'

'Why does your Colonel Lawrence sojourn on the North-eastern frontier? To watch the mountains—tourist? Everybody knows that he is there to stir up the border tribes against Amnullah. Why?' Again that glancing gaze —elusive, reproachful. 'Amnullah is in close alliance with Moscow. What happens when your Government is challenged about Colonel Lawrence in India? They say: "He is not there". When pressed they say: "He is there; but ah! he has been ordered home". What do you make of that? A damned scandal.' He shrugs. Katherine Mayo now . . . tips off cigarette ash with a lean finger tip . . . a Government agent.

'I take the boat home to India—what happens? This side of Port Said I am a good fellow. I can drink. I can play cards. I can dine. The white passengers are all right. I do not contaminate the vessel. Through the Canal and after they will have nothing to do with me. I am a dog. Is that double face?—tell me.'

One cannot help feeling that on the whole the Indian has a fairly thin time in Oxford. There is a general impression—among many undergraduates at least—that there are far too many coloured students in the university, and where stray personalities may scintillate in the Union debates (Indians have attained subordinate office there) the general reception is a rather cold one, and naturally they stick very closely together: they attend lectures, play tennis, or take tea together, and seldom (under my own observation at least) did otherwise. The other day I was one of a little knot of undergraduates that a tutor had collected for lunch: six sat to table, five whites and one Indian. As we broke up, I, chatting for a moment or two with my host in the doorway, was able to note the manner of our departure. The tutor's pleasant villa stood on a road parallel with the main one, and it was possible to gain the busier thoroughfare by equidistant routes. As the men straggled through the gateway the four whites took the right; and without hesitation the Indian, who was last, adopted the alternative course, alone.

That gesture was symptomatic.

Vacations are not less lonely for the Indian student. There are very few accommodating English homes. Hotels are doubtful (in the older university towns there are shops where coloured

students, if not actually barred, are treated with scant courtesy). Many go abroad; a number to Paris, a few to India, conveying a legacy of bitterness consequent upon their experience in England.

Highly intelligent, and disputatious to a degree, they have introduced into university life a quality of their own—a *naïveté* at once amusing and exasperating. They hold a conception of English social life based apparently upon the smoke-room stories of the steamship lines. I once heard an extremely cultured Pathan declare with utter solemnity that every tea-shop waitress in London was a prostitute. On another occasion an acrimonious dispute arose between two Hindus, the ground of the quarrel being a motoring fatality in Bombay. A coolie apparently had been knocked down by a car belonging to one of the men in question. The conversation ran:

'You killed him.'

'I did not.' Coldly.

'You were speeding.'

'I did not kill him. It was the chauffeur.'

'You instructed the chauffeur to speed, anyhow.'

'I did not kill him, . . .' etc.

I lunched with an Indian who dripped quotation. Curiously he had conceived an affection

for the work of W. H. Davies, and he waved the fork above the salad bowl:

> When I would go alone at night to see
> The moonlight, like a big white botter-fly . . .

His thick, moist—much too moist—vehement lips would not be stilled:

> Dreaming on that old castle near Caerleon
> While at its side the Usk went softly by . . .

Forlornly with an empty plate I waited as he began to beat time with the salad fork:

> When I would watch at lovely clouds in Heaven,
> Or watch them when reported by deep streams . . .

And so, without mercy, he dallied between a *Yorkshireman and His Meal,* declaiming the whole six verses. . . .

FEB. 15. *Invitation*

At the end of a chat about eighteenth-century politicians, the Warden asks: 'Would you like to meet Dean Inge?'

Lunch on Sunday. . . .

*Encounter*

In the hall of the Warden's residence a tall hat bespeaks the Dean's presence, and I find him in the library with the Warden and two under-

graduates. He shakes hands perfunctorily, and sinks into a settee doubling his odd little apron. Heavy brows bristle over sharp, pertinent features; he listens with half-closed eyes, but the attitude bears nothing of repose. There is something feline in the inclination of the head. Question—and response, barbed more often than not. He talks about his own trip to America. . . . At lunch there are the two daughters of Robert Lynd. As I sit beside the Dean I remember with an inward groan that he is deaf. . . .

'I am going to the Mediterranean in a few weeks' time,' he announces, addressing his plate. There is no side glance, but accepting this as the opening of a conversation I respond: 'Do you know the Mediterranean very well?' For myself I have never been there. What can one say?

'Oh, yes,' he answers, 'I 've been there before. This time I 'm going to ——' and he reels off a list of calling places. We eat. Silence. . . .

'I have been wondering,' I shout, 'because I 'm interested as a practitioner, how you keep pace with the demands of the *Evening Standard*. Freshness, variety of subject, etc. . . .'

'Oh, just hand to mouth,' he answers, 'hand to mouth.' We eat. I exchange an opinion about the O.U.D.S. with my other neighbour.

Again silence; but the silence must be broken. What can one say? . . .

'Have you ever considered writing biography?'

'Never.' He eats. Drinks wine. Silence. . . .

'There is a subject you could do particularly well.' I have reached a point when I don't care very much what I say to the unresponsive fellow.

'What is that?'

'Frederick the Great.'

'He has been done by Carlyle,' snappily. 'Besides, I have no taste for the military side. Too many things of that kind have been done already.'

I cry that I hadn't referred to the military aspect of Frederick's career, but to his friendships and intellectual sympathies. No answer. Has he not heard? We eat for some little time. . . . Presently. 'I went to a meeting of the Eugenic Society . . .' He names the date.

'Indeed.'

'Yes. There is still a good deal of opposition.'

'From whom?'

'The Roman Catholic and Labour people. . . .'

Silence . . . cigarettes . . . coffee. . . .

FEB. 16. *The Gulls*

Round Medly Weir with B——. Everything ice-bound. The willows range scraggy knuckle-bones beside the water. A train rattles towards the station, throwing off a rumble from the gigantic sounding-board. Above the weir we venture across the frozen surface to the other bank. Lower down, where a thaw has darkened the ice, a dark bird plops in the steely water and vanishes for a time. A cormorant? Now a second follows, and we mark the ultimate reappearance of both. These birds (I am informed) are rare visitors to this part of the river. Later we pass a gloomy concourse of swans, standing on the ice-lip, where one, indulging in a series of physical jerks, crickles through the thin ice to the gloomy satisfaction of its colleagues. '*Didn't* we tell you?'

An old man waves a knobby stick, insisting that we pause, and he points to the haze already lifting around the distant spires. 'A seagull! I just seed 'en—a seagull!' He holds us with a glittering eye. 'A seagull!' his voice lifts faintly as he acquaints other pedestrians. 'I seed . . .' And his stick wavers uncertainly towards the utmost reaches of the dusk. . . .

*B.M.*

This year I must spend some time in the British Museum, reading in the manuscript room, and surveying the immense Place collection of clippings at Hendon. O.S. writes: 'You will enjoy the Reading Room. It is one of the most romantic places in London. On one side may be a down-at-heels journalist; and on the other a Peruvian prince! . . .'

FEB. 27. *The New Adelphi*

J. M. Murry in the schools with a big audience. I had expected a rather tall, lean figure, and was surprised to find him of medium size and certainly not lean. Wrote a note and sent it up to the platform. After the lecture—'Poetry and Religion'—I introduced myself and M., of whom he had heard, but had not seen. . . .

Chatted a while about Oxford. He was very tired. The officials of the English Club hanging around impatiently meanwhile, and a further group waiting for an informal interrogation, one supposes. . . .

FEB. 28. *Presidential Debate*

A full house. M. visiting Oxford is in the cramped gallery looking down upon the three

presidential candidates, Conservative, Liberal, and Labour. Mr. Gilbert Frankau adorns the left hand of the president's chair, Mr. Laurence Housman the right. To a motion, 'That this House is in favour of the Abolition of Capital Punishment,' they will cross swords later, but not before the three candidates have spoken.

It is cold on the floor of the House, for Oxford (and Europe) is wind-swept and ice-bound. Men shuffle and beat numbing feet impatiently, and the speakers, quickened by the cold, step to the motion briskly. The Conservative candidate brings a slightly exaggerated House of Commons manner; the Labour candidate, a logical mind, and an always efficient wit; but the palm of the evening falls to the Liberal. With dark, truant hair, and a ponderously Johnsonian style, he makes diverting play with the suggestion that a murderer should be allowed to live and compelled to labour in captivity for the maintenance of his victim's family! Envisage the position: instalments from prison to home would arrive weekly and regularly. After a while even the children would begin to make inquiries, and in answer the mother (naturally) would be a trifle shy. But at last, in answer to their persistent questioning, she would communicate the truth. A sense of curiosity no less than one of gratitude would impel them to seek out their benefactor.

They would visit the prison together, that they might tender their thanks in person. In course of time, when the happy moment of release arrived, what more natural for the prisoner than to fly to the very hearthstone with which his energies had been for so long a time connected? And then? . . . then? . . . Nothing save to marry the girl! . . .

Delightful fooling; but there is no fooling about Housman—sober, slightly rotund, he speaks with peculiar intensity and conviction. Not so Frankau. With facile diatribe, and copious interlarding of slang, he leans across the dispatch boxes. One observes how quick his eyes are—and hard! *Bon Viveur!* Man of the World! We are informed that this generation is 'soppy'. Humanitarian principles are 'all bunk!—all bunk!' A Man of the World . . . cynical, facile. The author of *Gerald Cranston's Lady*. . . .

The House listens loosely, and with obvious slackening of interest. One rejoices that the Man of the World isn't getting it across. The motion is carried against him. . . .

FEB. 29. *Interlude*

'There is only one Canon Streeter,' I announce, 'with beard—and trousers, and everything.'

'But why trousers?' asks M., who has an insatiable curiosity about everything.

'There he is.' I raise a sudden finger, indicating an umbrella, beard, and trousers, turning the corner of New College Lane. M. races forward to catch a glimpse of the canon. I lope after, and we both peer around the angle of the wall. Alas, the author of *Reality* has gained the bend of the road. The inclined head disappears. And the trousers! 'Was that he? Now—about the trousers? . . .'

MARCH 5 *'Toggers'*

Last day of the Torpids. The weather, mild and springlike, unbinds the earth, though there are reaches of the river where one may find the ice still floating. On the towing path (the gravel lifts in great clods on one's soles) all eyes are focussed upon the stretch of cold green water whence the boats will shortly come.

'Spring to it like TIGERS!' We heard that injunction last, a week ago, as we shared the path with hurtling figures upon horses or bicycles, bellowing through megaphones to perspiring and quiescent crews. Now the hour has struck, and the boats have paddled to the Iffley Lock quarter, taking stations at appointed intervals. Spectators thicken on the bank; men in running shorts prepare to follow the fortunes of their crew, racing, if need be, from one end of the course to the other. On the grass at the starting-point,

a battery of tiny black cannon points its diminutive muzzles towards the distant barges. The first detonation will notify the crews that they have but five minutes grace. . . . Fire!!! The dull boom rolls across the meadows. The crews, stripping sweaters, sling them over to the bank. . . .

Near at hand an undergrad is swinging a heavy service revolver, a tousled length of cord dangling from the ring. There is a slight flow of spectators from the starting-point. One finds a place where the boats will have gathered way and things are likely to happen. The second cannon crashes. Before the echoes have skittled into extinction oar blades are straining in the water, and the race goes forward. . . .

A few faint cries of inquietude arise at the outset. The first crew sweeps on, pulling strongly, its familiars racing on the bank. When one's own college moves alongside, one moves instinctively. Bang! Bang! Bang! Revolver shots break out close at hand, a little to the rear. What does that denote? A bump? And by whom? . . .

On the river men are pulling with strained, intent faces, aloof to all entreaty—automatons for all the response they make to this invocation. The coxswain sits, his eyes upon the stern of the leading boat as it slips through the eddies as frail as a wisp of driftwood. The sharp little

bow chases relentlessly, a stream of frail foam starting from the cutwater. The distance narrows. It was a yard—now it is but two feet. With each stroke the pursuing bow gives a minute lurch nearer . . . nearer . . . nearer. . . .

The roar on the bank increases. Half a dozen strokes will do it. The inscrutable bow advances. One feels that no power of recovery will enable the leading craft ever to make escape. It is all so forthright and foreordained. The smooth, aggressive nose glides in, sliding beside the opponents' tiller. Revolver shots crash successively . . . triumph . . . and shouting. Both boats draw to a standstill. . . .

Along the bank a burst of shouting runs like file-firing towards the barges and Folly Bridge. The leading boat, no larger than a water beetle in the distance, dims in the early evening haze. What is happening? Is the race still in progress? Above the crowded towing path, a tiny flash of crimson spurts towards the trees that form a background to the barges, a little smoke runs out, and a revolver shot strikes the ear. Another flash and report, echoing over the sounding-board of the meadows. More cheers . . . more shots . . . thinly, someone is winding a horn . . . all over? . . .

The haze deepens as we return. Men are paddling to the barges, and punts, gliding from

one side of the river to the other, ferrying crews and spectators. On the roofs of the barges men empty their revolvers in the air, not without a touch of ceremony. Against the darkening trees the flash bites a deeper red than formerly. 'Oh, well rowed! . . . well rowed! . . .'

Suppers and bonfires to-night. . . .

*Drunks—Total and Semi-*

To-night I encountered a servant in one of the colleges unfolding an account of the proceedings at which he had been present. Much drunkenness, and indiscriminate damage arising out of it, smashing of crockery and windows, sickness and excretion over the floors, tearing up of valuable plants in the gardens; destruction of tables and chairs, w.c. seats among other things to feed bonfires; and much filthy language. 'I didn't like it,' he commented, 'and I 've been in the army at that. Them 's the fellows you 've got to call "Sir",' he concluded. There was contempt in his eyes. . . .

MAR. 10. *The Buchmanite*

Had a note to-day from Y——, whom I met in University College—'Can you go to tea with a few of us who get together co-operatively to

research—*John IX*—blind man cured, and Pharisees peeved. I 'm sure you 'll enjoy it. . . .'

Had a chat later with B—— about the movement. He would put it at about a hundred strong in the university. Religion, with no hymns, and no theological phrases. Discussion informal. Nothing, in fact, to hinder the direct contact of a man with his Maker. . . .

Shall I go?

MAR. 12. *Tea and Experience*

Y—— calls, and I am constrained to go with him to the Buchmanite party, to a house somewhere in the neighbourhood of the museum.

There we stand around drinking tea, and eating thinly cut brown bread and chocolate biscuits. Presently Y—— sheers off, and I am left in conversation with a man sporting a black eye. I wonder vaguely how he got it, and commence describing the last bare-knuckle fight that I remember, rather to his embarrassment, when a loud voice announces: 'To the upper room!'

With this apostolic injunction we climb the stairs, and enter an apartment where a number of people are already squatting on the floor. There are one or two chairs, but the squatting circle is augmented from time to time as certain latecomers insinuate themselves. Throughout, despite

much solemnity and intentness, pervades the faintly casual air of Oxford. . . . Our host apparently is the oldest person present. He has a tanned, rather ascetic cast of features. He assumes control. . . .

'Eric?' A man handling a pocket-book and a sheet of paper takes the hint. Evidently Eric anticipates what is required of him. 'We are concerned in this last meeting of term,' he announces, 'with the guidance of God in our lives. You will remember how, in preceding meetings, we talked together about the Gospel of St. Luke, and the great times we've all had. Perhaps if we try to gather up the threads of that this afternoon—but first shall we have a time of quiet?' He drops his head. . . .

Silence falls. There is dead silence for a second or two, then minute coughs, scraping feet, wheezing breaths, all mitigate the sum effect. Late sunshine filters through the window. It gilds the hair of a heavy blonde (a German girl?) beside the piano, and falls upon her companion, a negro. A minute passes . . . two minutes—at last: 'Hum!' says Eric, breaking the tension. We lift our heads. Then he explains that this is a joint confessional, and calls upon one of the company to witness to the hand of God in his life. . . .

A man relates how, having had charge of a

number of schoolboys in a personally conducted tour of America, he found himself in New York on the point of leaving the country, with an exceeding great desire to remain. He had only a very small sum of money at his disposal—a sum quite insufficient to maintain one for any length of time in the city; also, he had arranged a long anticipated holiday with his wife on his return. What should he do? At the crucial moment guidance came. He received a letter from his wife, announcing that if he wished to stay a little longer in America he was to consider himself at liberty to do so, which resolved one problem; and a gift of twenty-five pounds from a totally unexpected source, resolved the other. This was a proof of God's guidance as he conceived it.

He is succeeded by an alert, spectacled fellow with a reminiscence of the Black Forest. From time to time (said this man) when out walking with his companions, he contrived to 'barge ahead' for a little 'quiet time'. At nightfall, sleeping two in a room, bedmates were selected by cutting cards. His room-mate had from the first glanced rather askance upon both prayer and Bible reading; but as the week wore on his (the speaker's) influence began to be felt. Before the end of the holiday his companion had become so genuinely interested in the Buchmanite movement that he returned thanks for such an introduction

to it. He observed the hand of God even in the cutting of cards. . . .

There is a mild dispute about the validity of such guidance, when another speaker succeeds. He was preaching, for the second time in his life, in a certain church when, arranging the sermon notes on the Bible, to his profound dismay he perceived that he had brought in mistake only blank sheets of paper. A truly fearful moment! What ought one to do? He prayed quietly, and afterwards, without the aid of notes at all, was able to speak very freely, and to deliver a valuable message. . . . Another instanced a case of confusion in preaching—the discovery in the rostrum of a Bible containing only the Old Testament, and so on. . . .

Night falls as we disperse. 'Is it what you expected?' asks Y——.

APL. 28. *Return*

Six weeks ago one left a habitation of bare outlines, and bleak wind-swept streets. To-day the hot sun soaks everything. Everywhere, sunlight and shadow—a fretting of spires with tall leafage dappling the roadways. . . .

Beside the river, gaunt willow knucklebones give place to tender green; waters were dull steel—now fishes flit in the sun-shot depths, their

shadows duplicated upon the gravel of the bank. An old nag lies full stretch dreaming—Pegasus? Elysium?—and as one approaches he lifts a slightly reproachful head, and with a cumbrous effort to rise, flashes all four shoes in the sunlight. No matter. He sinks back again. . . . A terrier rats; a swan cruises, breaking silver, sending a long fanlike ripple to stir the rushes. Water glistens at the base of its neck, and languidly its feet are drawn through the cool, clear liquid. Forgotten the lean days of winter, and the reaching and screeching for odd scraps thrown from the bank. . . .

### *Barter*

This morning I sallied out to buy a lounge coat, so the assistant said: 'I can make you one for £3 10s., sir'; and instantly accommodating he ran his fingers beneath the cloth he thought I fancied. He made this announcement with such ingratiation that I joined issue with a distinct tremor of remorse. How could one calculate the sacrifice with which he was conceding his stock? However —I steeled my heart. 'Too much,' I said grimly.

'Well, how much would you think of giving, sir?'

'A great deal less than that.'

'How much, sir?' He eyed me artfully.

'About £2 5s.,' I answered rather at random.

He fell to £2 15s. instantly, and then, like Davie Balfour's uncle in the House of Shaws, 'cash! —cash!' he jerked. Of course, I am now regretting that I didn't further reduce my offer.

. . . . .

On Saturday last one barber in the city gave eighteen 'beauty massages', all to undergraduates. Haircut and shave for Dons on college premises, five shillings. He has a roaring trade!

MAY 1. *May Morn*

Bright dawn. The air aquiver with the singing of birds. A cock calls . . . a pattering of footsteps in the street below. Somewhere a clock strikes off the quarters. It is half-past five—the old pit time—and of days, May Day.

Arise. A faint mist lingers in the grasses, and —leaf or bough—nothing stirs in the garden. Blossom, an arrested cascade, pours over the grey walls; but there is little time to linger over that. A dash of water, a scramble into clothes, a creaking of the stairs, and the door opens upon the street quietly, for the rest of the household is not yet astir. . . .

Through Oxford cyclists spin . . . a string of motors . . . a cluster of young girls, bright-eyed

and rosy as the morning . . . a white-bearded figure . . . then a couple of undergraduettes, a trifle pasty in the heightening light. No time for lip stick or powder, one fancies . . . still more cyclists, all moving Magdalenwards.

The east throws up a warm, mother-of-pearl screen beyond the Sheldonian and Clarendon Buildings. Augustan windows flame, an avenue of light into the faint mist. Then, beneath the cool shadow of St. Mary's into the High, where pilgrims pour down upon the bridge. Here beneath the poplars they thicken, gradually encroaching upon the roadway, until a dense body blocks the thoroughfare. Overhead the mellow stone of the tower warms to the rising sun. On the top dark heads are moving, and in a moment choristers will hail the dawn, though there are more than choristers on that height. . . .

The bells beat six . . . and the choir begins. Faintly a murmur in the void, the singers open, and in the hush the chant increases:

*Te Deum Patrem Colimus* . . .

With immutable gravity the Latin cadences unfold upon the morning—over all the concourse and the meadows. Even the birds are hushed. The poplars lift in silence. . . .

All over. The last strain dies, and with its passing the many voices are released—there is

murmuring and laughter, and a mass movement to the Martyrs Memorial for the folk dancing. So—down the High again, towers and pinnacles ashimmer with light, to the buoyant interchanges, fluttering kerchiefs, and brisk bells of the dancers. . . .

MAY 2. *'Town, Village, and Country Labourers'*

To tea at the Murrays', where are also Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond. Mrs. Hammond, a pleasant, freshly coloured woman, and her husband tall, with dark, slightly silvering hair, glasses faintly green over a dark moustache, and an exceedingly ready smile. Chatted about my thesis for a little time with Mrs. Hammond, who appeared rather more aggressive in conversation than her appearance denoted. Felt a little scared of her. Later the conversation drifted to the recent attack upon their work in the *Quarterly Review*, by Miss A. A. W. Ramsay. They were exceedingly mild about it all. Strange to feel how *serenely* they took the whole affair, in spite of some considerable research in the British Museum to check charges and to draft a reply. . . .

The firm, hospitable, and consciously directing hand of Lady Mary directed J. L. and myself into the garden; but presently we found the road, and in the stiff breeze we walked on to Masefield's,

chatting about the *Speaker* days, and the order of the Tory mind in Oxford. . . .

Walked back in the thrashing rain. . . .

MAY 3. *Encounter*

Walking in the parks to-day with F——, encountered Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Hammond. When they stopped introduced them to my companion as 'The Hammonds'. Felt vaguely uncomfortable during the interchange. How would they regard the introduction? One always thinks and speaks of these two people collectively.

MAY 8. *The Parks*

Out this afternoon to watch the Yorks-University match. F——, with whom I went, is also a Yorkshireman familiar with the Bramhall Lane ground as the back of his hand. 'But the beauty of this match is,' he said, puffing slowly at his pipe, 'that you can always walk in free.'

Around the pitch a lazy line extends, of men lolling in deck chairs or sprawling on the turf. It is a perfect day for cricket—much sunshine and no wind. A air of languor pervades the scene. Occasionally a terrier or a spaniel trots between the outfielders and the wicket, and the smart crack of the bat strikes out the loudest

sound in the somnolent afternoon. When a smart cut, or a particularly clever piece of fielding evokes applause, a patter of clapping hands breaks out, but that is the only demonstration. Click goes the bat, a flicker of white legs, the swoop of a harlequin cap, and — 'Nicely — nicely,' shouts F—— on the approved Bramhall Lane note. . . .

A few casual heads are turned in our direction, mild surprise one supposes at this transport of enthusiasm. Little we care for that. What do they know of cricket, who only Oxford know? Battle is joined, and for us it is sufficient that Rhodes the debonair should stand, trim and capable, about to make his run. He was playing, this mighty man, before the majority of those now watching were born into the world. He swings the ball down. It is the last of the over, a maiden one.

'Things are rather slow,' says somebody.

'Oh, indeed,' responds F——, instantly stung into observation. 'This is only a practice match for Yorkshire!'

A practice match? Again heads are turned. Who is this man?

. . . . .

Oxford is lovely now. I look out upon green reaches where trees are simply enormous mounds of blossom, apple and pear, and hawthorn, pink

and white, shows everywhere in full bloom. In Balliol quad, whither I passed yesterday for a tutorial, is almond blossom rich before the hall, and over everything, the towering screens of foliage and the blue pall of the sky. . . .

The river calls—punts and deep plush cushions of size enough to make an adequate couch. One plashes slowly down the winding waterway, with the dipping of branches on the bank, and an avenue of trees so tall that one is able to linger in undappled, aqueous green shadow. . . .

Beyond the parks towards the more open spaces of the Cher, a slight wind frets the surface of the water. Plop! Plop! Diminutive waves are clapping on the bows. Beneath the willow branches where men linger with knees in air, a gramophone weaves a lazy pattern of sound in the silent afternoon. An odd canoe streaks on, with a faintly chanted, 'Blow the Man Down'. Up . . . up . . . hand over hand lifts the dripping pole. . . .

OCT. 12. *Shadows*

Returning to Oxford to-day, broke my journey at Nottingham. As I climbed the castle path between the lawns bright with flowers, I thought of Paul and his mother (*Sons and Lovers*) twenty

32868

years ago, ascending similarly to the exhibition in the Castle Museum. . . . Later, waiting for the Oxford train, D. H. L. pursued me. . . . I strolled down the length of what was obviously a 'local'. Was this the train to Bestwood? Here a collier laddie leaned through one window, smoking a cigarette, and blowing the smoke negligently through his nostrils. In another carriage one glimpsed a plump, ruddy girl, her head snuggling in her lover's shoulder—then a vista of a mother and four children, she peeling a banana and eyeing the fruit with a melancholy relish. There was one figure missing—that of a small, ginger-bearded man, bearing an expression half whimsical, half 'lost', as we say in the northern communities. I retraced my steps. It was then dusk, and I may somehow have missed him. . . .

Dark when we ran out of Nottingham. The train raced with fine futility against the night —roared and oscillated against the swift, deep shadows of the countryside, without avail. Lamps flickered, wheeled. Faster. . . .

After a while I went into the corridor. There were only two other occupants of the carriage; a woman, and a jovial fellow with a fat Pickwickian face, twinkling eyes, and a tie-pin to match. He followed me out, and observing that I stripped the cover from a packet of *Navy Cut*,

suggested return. 'Please smoke. We don't mind. In fact my wife and I like it.' I mumbled that I was stretching my legs, and he returned to his seat, while I remained in the corridor watching the night. He would think me a dull, anti-social clod. . . .

OCT. *Review*

We are walking in the serene delight of autumn. Colouring flows from deep crimson, through russet and pale amber to a very lush green. The backs are thickly strewn with willow leaves. Across the span of many a tiny bay the wind has eased a carpet in, leaves edge to edge in unbroken mosaic, presenting the illusion of substance. Why should not one tread upon it? Down the lanes, berries and the bright scattering of hips, and leaves drifting and flickering through the air all day long. . . .

So far as my position in Oxford is concerned I feel I have discovered *poise*. Last year I was exceptionally eager to mix as much as possible. There were few meetings that I cared to omit. I feel that I shall omit many more now. What matters is the burden of work into which one has been thrown. I can conceive myself as a *student*. It has been rather difficult hitherto. . . .

### *The Younger Generation*

'Did we ever bomb Berlin?' Thus L—— in conversation to-day. This generation was in the nursery during the war years, and is, in consequence, rather detached, at times politely incredulous when confronted with first-hand information of 1914–18; but—but—warms particularly to the adventure (not the degradation) of military conflict. League of Nations Enthusiasts, Ministers of Religion, All Citizens of Good Report, please take notice. . . .

### *Outsiders*

Who are the outsiders?

I observe X—— in the public library, at odd meetings, in the cinema, and almost always alone. I cannot recall that he is a member of any club. He frequents no circle. He does not even drink coffee in the Cadena.

Can he be an outsider!

Tea with J—— and K—— to-day, neither of whom I have met before this term. J—— is in 'digs' for the first time. Is he desolate thus to vacate college premises? He answers from the depths of his chair:

'Not a bit.'

'Expense?'

'A little. It 's cheaper outside.' He adds:

'I had a rotten time last year—a rotten time'. I make a sympathetic sound. At length—'Class feeling'.

I pass the currant bread. 'You astonish me. You are forgetting how rapidly Oxford is becoming democratized. You are forgetting 50 per cent of scholarship men——'

'Poor . . . deserving . . . and never failing to reach out after the standards of the class above them.' He concedes a faint smile. 'Listen . . . in my first term at Oxford I played soccer. Everything went swimmingly the first game. I played back. The other back was Lord ——, son of ——. He wasn't bad at first. He 'd chat a little when play went up the field. Then he discovered who I was. (J—— is a lower working-class student.) Never spoke to me again. Never tried. . . .'

'Eton men are worst,' observed K——. 'It makes one's blood boil to hear the way they address their "scouts". Oh, they 're not violent; but the men are regarded as a peculiar type of animal. But then, nobody does care for the Eton crowd——'

'Here 's an incident,' said J——. 'Last term I went into the Common Room to do a little reading. There was a crowd chatting around the fire. They gave me a full stare on entering, and kept on staring. I took no notice, picked up a

journal, and took a seat. I coughed—without intention. They all clapped at that. First and last, nobody spoke. I suppose I wasn't "public school". Yes, on the whole I 'm glad to take lodgings.'

Instantly K—— capped this. 'I met a man in hall last night who discovered that I was Labour. He said solemnly: "K——, do you believe in walking down the High and picking people's pockets? That 's what you socialists are after! You 're the fellows who get behind stone walls in Ireland and shoot the landlords!"'

'What did you answer?'

'I told him I had shot quite a few landlords in my time.'

Are J—— and K—— outsiders?

. . . . .

I was with B—— in his rooms when C——, his room-mate, entered in high feather. He moved about the place with restrained rapture. It appeared that he had been able to secure a ticket for the —— Club dance. I said: 'Is this club —this dance, ever so important?'

'Rather!' C—— gazed curiously at this abounding ignorance.

I had never heard of the club before. . . .

Query: Am *I* an outsider?

There is, I take it, an exclusive club called the Bullingdon, for news of which I must revert to London newspapers and journals. Assuming the membership to be something like fourteen —there was that number in the last photograph I remember—it would appear to the acute observer that some three thousand, nine hundred and eighty-five undergraduates share with me the distinction of being outsider to the Bullingdon. There are great numbers of men outside the Union itself—outside athletic activities, outside the literary societies, outside the hundred and one coteries with which the university is riddled. Oxford is sufficiently a world in miniature to present for every type of individual a concourse however slight of kindred spirits. . . .

Who is an outsider?

The Master of —— as I encountered him the other day drew around himself the folds of his black stuff gown a little forlornly. . . .

NOV. 19. *Supervisory*

A note from Cole. He has been appointed by the History Board to act as supervisor from next term. Will Friday at 12 suit me? Sumner will be going to America. . . .

NOV. 29.

Tea with Roberts. A little wrangle over the comparative merits of contemporary caricaturists.

A girl from Somerville, elected 'Strube' of the *Daily Express*. Apparently she hadn't heard of Low. Then we passed to the essential difference between German political caricatures and English, and the possibility of an English *Simplicissimus*. M. Stuart, the president of the Union present. Walked home with him. He is short, dark, trim, incisive; the sort of man about whom one at once plunges into prophecy. . . .

NOV. 30. *Miners' Welfare'*

Lunched, with the rest of the Miners' Welfare students, in All Souls, at the invitation of Lord Chelmsford, six men and two girls. There was a sweet, '*Bombé* Lawrence'—pink ice, with orange and dates. 'Lord Chelmsford eager that we should have a taste of the college beer—famous stuff, made, I suppose, *from beer*. It came in silver tankards, and we sipped. He asked me how I liked it, rather keen I think for appraisement. I didn't really like it, and I hesitated for a moment —then (Heaven forgive me!) answered very seriously, 'I think I could grow to like it', evoking a general laugh.

'Afterwards we made a general tour of the college and called in the buttery to view the collection kept there by (I believe) the butler. Of some interest proved the belt, dagger, and head decora-

tions worn by Colonel T. E. Lawrence in the Near East. One of the girls slung the dagger with belt around her waist. There was a drawing of Lawrence by Augustus John, and reverentially unfolded (it was carefully wrapped in a cloth); a copy of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, now we were informed, selling for something around five hundred pounds. It was fitting that we should suspend breathing until this treasure had been retrieved by the solicitous hands of its keeper. . . .

NOV. 30. *Interlude*

So the *Bickerstaffe* must go to the breakers. . . .

The vessel was old enough—perhaps forty years or more—when I first set eyes upon it, and spelt out with difficulty the gilt block lettering upon its bows. From the outset it represented, not merely Blackpool (which was also the TOWER and the WHEEL); but the sea and all its associations. Blackpool represented many other things, of course. It was a place where one watched crowds of adults swallowing vast quantities of oysters from shells sprinkled with pepper and dripping vinegar . . . giant sturgeon, lazy in the cool green of the aquarium . . . slow minutes when parents had a 'quick one' inside a place known as Yates Wine Lodge. . . .

But prevailingly Blackpool became (and remained) a haunt where the *Bickerstaffe* crept between the long piers trailing a glorious scarfe of smoke. The unquiet ghost followed. In the village, with eleven and three-quarter months to dwell upon the glories of that week, we beheld bows starting a fretted frond of water, pale-green isinglass, that ran a stream of foam into the wake. Underground we tramped the glistening spray-wet deck, sniffed the heady odour of the engine room; recovered the lingering charm of the faded velvet cushions, and (what must certainly have been) the stale tobacco atmosphere of the state room. 'Paint me pimples and all', said Oliver to Lely. That was the *Bickerstaffe*. We regarded the whole with affection.

'Ye see that old tub yonder?' said one old boatman to another, on the day we touched Llandudno, 'give her a taste o' real narsty weather and she 'll sink like a stone!' He referred to the *Bickerstaffe*; and to one small boy tasting a few brief hours in that Welsh resort, the return journey hovered in terms of terrible adventure. . . .

We put to sea, beating N.N.E. The waters were choppy, and the wind, rain, and spray in coalition drove us from point to point, until those who cared to remain above took the meagre shelter afforded by the alleyway. The decks streamed grey foam. The smoke from the

thrumming stacks whipped thinly behind the bridge. The sun set. The *Bickerstaffe* rolled in the darkness, lurching, shivering, crashing upon the waters. We were likely to put into Blackpool? A sailor shook his head, and I began to regard my absent mother with slightly additional affection. I grasped with some tenacity the sodden cord of a lifebelt. When we marked the finger of the Tower, and its kindred lights bear off, we realized that whatever mooring places the crazy old vessel would make that night, the North Pier jetty would not be one of them.

As it happened we made Fleetwood, and hours overdue ran back into Blackpool on the electric railway, chastened, but quietly triumphant. The *Bickerstaffe* had won through! Was she not a marvel—and worthy to be admired?

There were other *Bickerstaffe* meanderings in the calm, late August evenings: long tranquil hours, with the sea like glass, and the dim water snoring sleepily beneath the bows. Away at sea we were able to watch how gloriously the town assumed its raiment for the likes of us: a banjo thrummed across the deck, and a mother-of-pearl collecting horn preserved its round:

> She is the Lily of Laguna,
> She is my lily—and my own. . . .

What could heart desire more?

In the war the *Bickerstaffe* disappeared—

paddling about rosy, Near Eastern harbours, one fancies. And now this is the end. . . .

Hail. . . . Farewell. It was never much more than that. Now. . . . Farewell.

DEC. 29. *Invitation*

To-day a letter arrives from the College Essay Society secretary, who is in Italy, making final arrangements about a paper I am to read. I am enabled (it appears) to make my choice in literature, philosophy, music, architecture, art generally, religion, science, or anything likely to provoke a general discussion. No one can complain of a cramping of subject matter. Last term there were papers on 'Education and Tradition', 'The Reading of a Poem', 'The Home-University-Library-Mind', 'Apologia pro Patria Sua', by an American.

Also comes a postcard from Sumner, my tutor in Balliol, with good wishes for the new year. He is leaving for America. I shall be sorry to see him go. He is a lovable man.

*Catacomb*

To the British Museum repository at Hendon, there to investigate the great collection of clippings

gathered over many years by the Radical Tailor of Charing Cross, Francis Place. An attendant indicates, on the third floor, a row of heavy bindings, runs a trolley in as a book-rest. His footsteps patter along the silent gangway, clip-clop on the iron stairs, and I am alone. Then silence. . . .

For a long while I heave out the great volumes, clippings from newspapers and journals of every description, covering the Reform and Corn Law agitations, from *The Times* and *Morning Chronicle* to the smudgily printed *Black* and *Yellow Dwarfs*. What a power for industry the man must have possessed! Dust filters into the nostrils. Now one is turning huge leaves in which social tit-bits, items of dress, of pastimes, prevail. And more volumes? Another row behind the first formidable fortification. I look around. . . .

At the end of the bookshelf the gangway, as straight as a ruler, reaches into perspective. I take a stroll, marking on either hand the silent ranking of volumes, file upon file, file upon file. Here are country newspapers a century old, Scotch, Dumfries; Irish, Belfast, their yellowing leaves now quite untouched, the vivid announcements stale, the shock of arms remote and nullified. The strong, coarse, vigorous life of the time lies all about, embalmed; but breathing implication. . . .

I retrace my steps in the silence, reverse the still perspective, and file upon file the musty old newspapers stand. The south country, the west country, for a century or more. I press ahead. Still more newspapers, the combined industry of multitudes now dead. I am still alone. Not a sound breaks the silence of that dusty floor save the movement of my own breathing. Yet not alone. A silent witness impinges on the mind. The dry bones stir, and will not be denied. Where can one escape this melancholy display? . . .

I descend the circular steps to the lower floor. Still silence, and the vast perspective. I clatter down the further steps, delighted beyond measure to reach the open air at last, to mark a shred of moving cloud, and to hear the thin bell of a motor bus. . . .

JAN. *Thesis*

The time has arrived to take some sort of stock: to assemble the multitudinous notes gathered together for the last twelve months or more, and to map out in convenient stages the career of the old Radical whose life I am writing. During the vacation I was fortunate enough (through the kindness of a member of the family) to secure a number of original letters written by this man when a midshipman at sea during the Seven Years' War. One handles the sheets with a student's thrill, written, as some were, to the swinging light of a ship's lantern—'The *Magnanime*, at sea—1759. . . .' I dare not begin to quote. . . .

However, the background is pretty nearly complete, and of what am I not aware concerning this century?—that country members were booted and spurred; that spies tracked Coleridge through the Quantock Hills; that Tom Paine was a corset-maker; that it took a week to travel from London to Edinburgh? Absurd to attempt any review. In addition, the multitude of pamphlets, parliamentary debates, state trials, all the personal

impedimenta relating to the central figure. I flatter myself that I have combed the Bod, and British Museum, as well as a number of provincial libraries pretty thoroughly for information about my hero. Sometimes one volume has yielded but a scrap—like Cockburn's *Memorials*, or Lord Broughton's (J. C. Hobhouse's) *Recollections*—and conserved and treasured it has been docketed in the store. Now in a general way I survey my material. Now it is conveniently laid out. I take my little axe. Twelve chapters or thirteen? (Not thirteen, that 's unlucky!) Chop! Chop! Chop! Chop! . . . fourteen chapters in all. Give me a pen! . . .

FEB. *G. D. H.*

To see Cole. In G. D. H.'s presence one always halts convicted, self accused, the thief of time. He moves mercurial, his conversation flickering from point to point with the incredibly brisk play of his mind. One wonders—does such energy defeat the end to which it is driven? There are those who indicate that this man has relinquished position after position once carried with irresistible fervour—the Prince Rupert of economic debate returning to find his camp merely in the grip of old ivy and lichen! For where now is Guild Socialism? The dry bones are littered

across the disputatious reaches of pre-war controversy. *The Next Ten Years* effects a prevailing sortie. What next? In any case G. D. H. does not lack the courage to admit his mistakes, and much may be forgiven him for that.

Consider his achievement. He is a don of University College, a lecturer and a tutor. His contribution to economic literature alone is monumental. He runs—or did until recently—a study group of his own. He is significantly associated with the work of Rewley House, the Workers Educational Association centre in Oxford. For years the Workers Educational Association throughout the country has levied a toll upon his services, and seldom in vain. He is a member of the consultative body of experts set up by the present Government to consider economic problems. He is a prolific journalist. And as if all this were indeed to a great extent insufficient, in collaboration with Mrs. Cole, he completes the full life with a little stream of detective stories, among the most competent released upon the generation.

He is one of the very few men in this country capable of writing an intimate history of early Radicalism, and his *Life of William Cobbett* is likely to remain the standard one for many years to come. In conversation with you he will admit

that he enjoyed writing *Cobbett*, and that is not surprising in one who greets you with a genial, casual, 'Hullo', on entry. . . .

So he sits smoking his cigarette, while conversation plays about the early reaches of the early nineteenth century. Was Cochrane's eccentricity a type of madness?—the springs of Sir Francis Burdett's political faith? The *Gorgon*? He darts into the library and produces a copy of that faded, smudgily printed journal. *Wooler's British Gazette*?—rare old newspapers of the Peterloo years—*The Black Dwarf*, *The Yellow Dwarf*; you may take them on loan if you choose. Anything more? You straggle at his brisk heels to the heavily loaded shelves, where a collection of industrial revolutionary literature invites inspection. Here is Henry Hunt, his memoirs. What about a life of Hunt? Yes, Hunt is worth a 'life'. Sympathetic treatment? 'That depends on the burden of morals you carry,' is the quick answer. And here is the old Radical, Major Cartwright—his material: *England's Ægis*, *The Constitution Produced and Illustrated*, the latter once the property of Alex. Galloway. And may one borrow these? Yes, yes—take them. And anything else. . . .

A tap upon the door, and a face protrudes. A begowned figure hovers, waiting for a tutorial. 'Just a moment,' says Cole. The head withdraws,

and the conversation hurtles along, his quick assent presupposing the conclusion you are labouring to reach. It is all a rather breathless but stimulating affair. Minutes pass. At length one makes adieu. Outside two men are waiting, both with an indifferently disposed expression upon their features, their eyes alone revealing impatience biting at their heels. . . .

### *The Will to Power*

A German in B——'s rooms takes complete charge of the conversation, pouring out philosophy, diverse criticism, with an energy that reduces the remaining members of the circle to mere shadows. His fingers close around a cup, frail as an egg shell in his huge fist; he announces smilingly—'Yes, I am in Oxford. I am here. How long shall I stay? I shall go shortly. There is nothing for me here—no. There is nothing to teach on my subject. I do not think I shall stay here long . . . Where shall I go? To the University of Chicago, perhaps? Perhaps to Leipzig. We shall see. What does it matter? . . .'

'Do have a cake,' says B——.

He takes a cake.

'Thank you. It does not matter. Wherever I go, what happens? I have my credentials, but what are they worth? What are credentials?'

'Rather fun to write out a set of one's own credentials,' suggests someone.

'I do not write my credentials. Masters write my credentials for me.' He makes the announcement soberly. 'What are credentials? I present myself thus'—sets down his cup. 'I say when I arrive, "Here am I"'—thumps his chest with a tremendous fist—'"Here am I! You see? I am here myself! I will prove myself!—eh?" That is what I say! I ask to show no bits of paper. "I will show you what I can do! I am a man! I am here!" That is what I say.' He nods quickly and drinks. .

I ask what he is doing, and he turns beaming.

'I write. I have written a thesis—a volume. It will be published.' Again he nods.

'Good. What is it all about?'

'A six-aside.'

'Six-aside?'

'Ah, yes, you think it a good title?—a good title? I write about society—sick'—he throws out his hands—'not well—invalid, you see? A—Sick—Society,' he explains heavily, nodding his head with each syllable. 'You think it good title?'

'Very.'

'Yes, it is a good title. I say . . .

What does he say? So the conversation runs. . . .

## *Alcohol*

One night in my first term I went to visit a friend in Oriel. At the head of the dim staircase a man stood, a trifle forlornly I thought, a slim figure, with a batch of pictures under his arm. 'Canvassing?' I suggested. He smiled. 'No—there 's a celebration on our staircase (he was not of Oriel). I expect they 'll be breaking things up. I 'm bringing my pictures to a safe place. I shouldn't care to have them destroyed.'

We entered, for he was also the friend of my host, and he spread them out upon the table, rich, imaginative vistas, derived, I suppose, from Omar. He was a keen painter it appeared; he did not booze; and they had determined that such should not be forgiven him.

'But they 're ordinary decent fellows?'

He shrugged. 'Hearties. They drink — somewhat. . . .'

. . . . .

Sooner or later the question of alcohol in Oxford will have to be tackled. For myself, during the course of a normal eight weeks' residence, I have encountered more drunkenness here than in a corresponding term of years in a mining village. At odd times one may encounter a miner with a bottle of ale sagging one pocket of his

coat; but I have never beheld a miner carry, as scores of undergraduates do, a bottle in both jacket pockets, and a further couple, one in each fist.

By this I should not care to convey the impression that the majority of undergraduates indulge in heavy drinking—indeed they do not; but while there are very, very few teetotallers, the number of heavy drinkers is appreciably important. A semi-drunken undergraduate is sometimes amusing. More often than not—with a capacity for foul language that would put a bargee to shame—he is an unmistakable disgrace. A totally drunken undergraduate is, of course, no more pleasing than a totally drunken textile or iron and steel worker. There is something pathetic about the thin veneer of public school manners displayed in such a case.

Broadly speaking, how do the authorities regard this free access to, and use of, alcoholic beverages among the undergraduates? 'Do Deans of colleges condone this kind of thing?' I asked a Dean as we sat discussing drinking at bump suppers, and the consequent destruction. 'That is what might be called a leading question,' suggested one of the company slyly watching the Dean. It *was* a leading question. The Dean smiled vaguely. 'Well,' he answered, 'I don't condone it. I don't care for it.' He twirled

his wine glass, and again he smiled. There was no decision in his voice.

I suppose, like his colleagues, he is to a certain extent tradition-bound. For six hundred years the life of the university has admitted the sale and the drinking of liquor on college premises. In these rich old rooms, venerable with evidence of culture, there exist also, still in use, the serving contrivances of a day when gentlemen counted it no disgrace (rather a condition of quality) to drink themselves under the table. I cannot aver that the Dean in question has ever so behaved—I have no evidence one way or the other; but this is the atmosphere into which the public school boy enters. He is very suddenly a man. He is now addressed as 'Mister', and he need not approach his preceptor in terms of 'Sir'. He can stay out late at night if he wishes, and the authorities do not thunder inquiries upon the door of his room. Within certain bounds his status as adult is recognized and established. Shall he not then do what he likes with his own? And since traditional habits of conviviality spell drinking, he falls in with the 'hearties', believing this to be the essential quality of college life.

Athletics and drink run together. A bump supper implies unlimited drink. At times a breach of minor regulations will incur on the part of the offender an obligation to fill the 'sconce'

cup with many pints, so that, like a loving-cup, it may be passed around from hand to hand. The consecrated beer!

I have heard the view advanced that non-alcoholic drinking will undoubtedly prove detrimental to a successful university career. I don't believe it. Certainly one recent president of the Union was an abstainer, and I have never observed that my own abstention prevented me from making the many contacts I can now look back upon.

The most important feature of the whole question is, that of those leaving Oxford to assume important positions (some of leadership) in the commercial, educational, and political life of the community, few ever set out with a real consciousness of the magnitude of the drink problem. Shut-eye, and a tolerant smile have done the trick. Until they meet it later, they are quite unconscious that such a problem exists, or that they have a social responsibility in the matter.

I cannot say that a general prohibition would effect a remedy. I am not certain that I would eliminate the sale of alcohol in the butteries. The new Oxford will be redeemed by the leadership of those college officials who personally elect for restraint, and the same applies to undergraduates. The old tradition is not important

to Oxford as an educational institution. And, since traditions are but mortal, let this pass out, unwept and unsung.

FEB. 15. *The Essay Society*

Went last night to my first meeting. P—— pacing the dim flags of the lodge to conduct me to a room on the north side of the quad. About a dozen men present, talking and smoking, and all drinking a dull, ruby mixture from large glasses. It was mulled claret. . . .

I took a chair at the hearthstone, beneath a reading lamp, with P—— master of ceremonies opposite. Other lights being out, all that I could perceive of the rest of the company was a half-circle of dimly apprehended figures deep in arm-chairs, lolling with legs crossed. Then P—— gave a nod, and we both stood before the hearthstone. He muttered a few Latin phrases, stooped, picked up a silver loving-cup from the hearth, gave a little bow towards it as he held it with both hands, sipped, and handed it to me—whereupon I bowed and took a sip in turn. It was more mulled claret. He recovered the cup, took his seat, and announced (with no more than the bare announcement) that he would call upon me to read my essay. All this in perfect silence from the other members. . . .

The essay occupied about half an hour in reading, and was received with close attention. At the close there was a break for ten minutes conversation. P—— stood before the fire and made a few remarks, took his seat, and without any desultory conversation others walked to the fireplace, said their say, until I suppose, nobody else had anything more to contribute. Again silence. Then P—— said he would call upon the speaker to reply. After that, everybody stood, P—— took up the cup of mulled claret, addressed it with a few Latin sentences, each bowing stiffly, drinking, and passing the cup on to his neighbour. As it drew near I reached out impetuously before my companion had drunk—gravely he drew it away, and sipped. After that it was my turn. P—— then placed it on the hearth again; the simple ritual ended; the meeting over. . . .

This form has been observed for about forty years. . . .

MAY. *The Martineau Club*

Suggestion of dewlap chin, a strong profile, but with the trick of rolling eyes towards the ceiling in a rather wheedling manner, and you have Father Ronald Knox reading his paper on religious toleration in Manchester College. . . .

In review at this moment (about an hour after

the end) I have quite forgotten what the paper was all about. There were certainly one or two flashes of wit, evoking laughter; but the body of the address—thin, sophisticated moonshine—has vanished. Remains, a prevailing impression of a highly agile figure, leaping, cavorting, swinging by the tail, and with much sophisticated mopping and mowing, making the most of its chain. . . .

Later, the discussion ran upon the arrogation by the Roman Catholic Church of the full and final revelation of truth. Had such a Church a place for the really progressive thinker?

Father Knox found no support, save in the intervening presence of the Principal, Dr. Jacks; 'though,' added the Doctor, 'whether he will thank me for the intervention, I cannot say'. The upshot of it was, that every Church must fight as a condition of its existence.

Did Father Knox agree? Again, I forget. He said so much—and so little. . . .

### *Beautiful but Dumb*

There is a story of a millionaire who, having listened for some time to an old schoolfellow's story of bad luck, pressed the bell. 'John,' he

said, when the footman appeared, 'show this gentleman out. He is breaking my heart!'

Let discretion temper your intercourse. Remember, an undue insistence upon 'poverty' may tend to embarrass a perfectly charming hostess, and at the same time impair the pleasing atmosphere of well-being indispensable to the party. Have the gumption to realize that the subject (however engrossing in Modern Greats) consorts but ill with the many servants, the silver, the salad sandwiches, and the tinkle of tea cups. . . .

'So he said: "Will you have a cheque for a thousand pounds, or a portrait by Watts?"'

'And what did you decide?'

'What do you think?' A gentle outpouring of laughter ripples the circle.

'Watts, I take it.'

Oh, why does she turn in my direction with an 'exceeding' interest in the coalfields? And moved by what demon, do I indicate the abominable level of wages, and the sheer distress of housekeeping on a very few shillings a week?

At first there is a tense silence—then, vague *malaise*—the slightest slackening, an odd clink of a cup. No one speaks. They are uneasy. They, who have so much to deliver about art, religion, motors, frontiers, are suddenly stricken dumb. When they do speak they let fall vague monosyllables. . . . 'Oh . . . yes . . . no. . . .'

There is ever so faint, so tremulous a breath of relief as I close. My hostess drops the subject like a hot brick (does she ever handle bricks?) Was she conscious of a latent reproach upon her well-appointed house, her well-appointed garden, her well-appointed tea, and (with one exception) her well-appointed guests? Cram the thing away. Damned spot! That 's better. . . .

'What are you doing in the vacation?'

'The Dolomites.'

'How interesting'—the company relaxes. Now it begins to move on its own familiar ground—hotels, customs, and so forth. The glancing, pleasantly fatuous conversation goes forward. In retrospect, one wonders how poverty in the coalfields ever managed to creep in. . . .

I have a feeling that I shan't be invited again to a social gathering at this house. . . .[1]

MAY 26. *The Mystic*

We are all unique; but some men much more than others, defy categories, and Rabindranath Tagore, the poet and mystic, now with us, is of that number. As an Indian, his stained skin must be shades lighter than that of many who crowd to hear his addresses. With his long snowy hair, and the fall of his silky beard, no one would

[1] Nor was I.—R.D., July 1931.

suspect (did they not otherwise know) that this man in flowing garments had once received the accolade of knighthood. If resemblances are worth anything, it is of an Old Testament patriarch, with quick (but not nervous) fingers whipping over the pages of his manuscript, that one is reminded. But one is already presuming upon category. . . .

The late afternoon was overcast, and beneath a frowning sky a great crowd assembled in the Arlosh Hall of Manchester College, for the last of the series of three lectures that he has been delivering. There were many Indians present, of course, and I took a seat behind a group of four, two of whom were women. They wore the bright headdress—strawberry, with tiny maroon flowers picked out in silver, and with a narrow border of seed pearls. They were chatting together quietly, one man with a rare mobility of gesture, but also with eyes, dark pools that never varied in expression. He seemed withdrawn in some mysterious fashion from the young people who streamed in steadily until all the seats were filled, and the aisles overflowed. . . .

Then Tagore came. With a patriarchal sweep of his white robe he took a seat upon the dais. He reads his lecture in a highly pitched voice, which would be supremely beautiful, if it were not for the slightly aggressive note that it con-

serves. What does he read? The unfolding of his own religious life. How one morning at eighteen, while the flowers were yet heavy with dew, he watched the day awaken beyond the palms, when for him it had seemed that a veil had been drawn from the face of nature and a universal meaning had been given to the tangle of life. In a moment, the invisible screen of the commonplace had been removed, and an all-pervading beauty had occupied his heart. He had received a consciousness of spiritual life in the super-personal world of man. His poem, *The Awakening of the Waterfall*, was the fruit of this spiritual experience. The waterfall, chilled and ice-bound throughout the long winter months, was suddenly touched by the warm rays of spring-time, and leapt in a flood of freedom. It found its ultimate purpose in unity with the sea. 'Lord of my life. . . .'

As the cadences of his voice flowed down the hall, I saw that one of the Indians was weeping. Oblivious of the whispered intervention of his friends, he swayed his head from side to side, refusing to be comforted. Outside the thunder grumbled faintly, and pale summer lightning darted through the windows, but the tranquil figure of the poet, reading with undiminished fervour, dominated the mind.

It is difficult to produce even a digest of what

he had to say. He pointed the road to freedom over the barrier of self; our identification with all humanity; our own love for the ideal man through which we shall become conscious of the great love that radiates from the Supreme Spirit Himself. The burden of his address on the Sunday had followed the same lines (when of the hymns, one was 'The King of Love my Shepherd is', and another one of Charles Wesley's). In our international relationships we moved in darkness so persistently that we could not see each other's faces. The Indian night falls swift, and I am told that in Oxford it has been the peculiar delight of Tagore to watch the falling dusk in an English garden. . . .

Rarely have we been conceded so rich a gift as the passage from East to West of this noble representative of India. The lecture over, we rose as he passed out with venerable head, and bowed shoulders, conscious that we should never see him again. But that rare unity of spirit that we had found in the spell of his cadenced voice, and in the wisdom and beauty of his message, Indians and Englishmen alike, we took away with us. Surely it was a portent that as we left the doorway the thunder growled more distantly, and the emerald lawn, the falling lilac and laburnum, were gracious in the sunlight?

## *Ruskin*

The Cinderella of Oxford institutions is a little way down Walton Street, domiciled in an unfinished, unimposing red-brick building, and (Cinderella tradition) maintaining a slight air of poverty.

No wonder. With slight finances, and students drawn overwhelmingly from the lower ranks of the working classes, here is a very humble corner of the kitchen hearthstone. Add to this—as one is bound to—non-membership of the university; and recognition only in the matter of the Economics Diploma, an examination which Ruskin men are entitled to enter; and it will be seen that even academically the analogy holds good.

After that it breaks down completely, for than Ruskin, a more aggressive and truculent body of students never poured through the streets of a university city. The Eton-Christ Church type of class consciousness is not more assertive. Ruskin students are men with a mission. There is a touch of the foray as they sweep the angle by Worcester; a definite glitter of arms as they approach the luxury 'Randolph' (hotel). 'Individually,' said a Ruskin man in my rooms, as he considered the undergraduate, 'individually I find 'em charming; collectively, I hate 'em like

hell!' He did not sing, as he was entitled, the Ruskin war song:

Put the thing through quickly,
Wage the class war slickly,
Hang the rich to lamp posts high—but don't hang me.
Stick to Marx, my hearties,
Damn the Labour Party,
Keep the hell fires burning bright for the bourgeoisie!

but those were his sentiments.

The one centre of university life, where as by natural right, they appear to possess a definite voice, is the Labour Club. In this haunt their voting strength—usually a *bloc*—is often decisive, though a little of the Jacobin envoy *en mission* wears thin before the social blandishments of the richer, bourgeois members of the club. At inter-debate and recreation they mix with the smaller institutions; but the Union never sees them save as visitors in its gallery. And ineligible for membership, it is extremely doubtful if the great majority of Ruskin men could afford the high subscription, were membership open to all.

There are odd times when one wonders whether (always with exception) the best type of working-class student ever enters Ruskin. There is an air of the Trade Union *arriviste* about so many—a type with which one becomes so familiar in Trade Union organization. I have never been accused of preserving particular reverence for the blank, self-effacing undergraduate; but I

must confess that there are moments when the 'hefty, hearty son of toil' representative gives me a pain. 'Hullo, lads, here 's the grub,' bawled a Ruskin man on entering my room, and eyeing the table set for tea. Nothing significant, of course. A mere peccadillo on my part, perhaps, to make mention of it. Only . . . one wishes that he hadn't said it in quite that way. In my time I have encountered a good deal of communal singing—hearty, wholesome stuff; the fervent voice, free fellowship, and all the rest of it—the breath of reality among the thin-blooded pedants of the university; but there are limitations to *Annie Laurie* and *Tom Brown's Body*, and twelve midnight is one of these. I speak advisedly when I declare that 'Off in the stilly night, ere slumber's chain has bound me,' I have wished it possible to transport Ruskin and its folk-songs to the middle of a blasted heath.

Let not the foregoing, however, preclude my appreciation of the good Ruskin men I have known, alert, companionable fellows. Out of their kindness I was enabled to spend more than one enchanting evening there—Sarah Allgood, who, with but the slight manipulation of a shawl and her own inimitable talent, brought Yeats and Synge into Ruskin. Soermus also brought his violin. . . .

Odd undergraduates, male as well as female,

'cultivate' Ruskin. They attend periodical dances in the hall. Some such visitors delight to patronize the fish and chip emporium down the street, purchase copious quantities, and with a democratic thrill, devour these in the thoroughfare. All rather novel and exciting . . . the *underworld* . . . life in the raw! etc.

JUNE 13. *Subfusc*

'Schools' examinations are now on, and men in their toggery stream down from nine to half-past every morning yearning to handle examination papers.

This morning slipped into J——'s rooms to wish him well. Found him rather shaken. A bottle of whisky glistened on the mantelpiece. He had been taking whisky in milk the previous night, and because of (or in spite of) this had slept very badly. He took a nip—prelude to Descartes, Berkeley, Locke, and Hume. . . .

JUNE. *Vale*

A sad business! For the last two years in terms of acquaintanceship—and for six months in terms of real intimacy—I have lived cheek by jowl with the old Radical. To-day he is dying.

An hour will make all the difference in the world. After lunch perhaps. . . .

The life of Cartwright does not draw to such a close as that of many another political figure. We do not witness a fervent Radical working from one position to another, from tinge to tinge, until the final creed is of a totally different hue. His death does not hinge upon some moment of crisis like that of the elder or younger Pitt. One moves in the presence of a man to whom the labour of each day, to the last few weeks of a very long life, fell consecutively and in order. He moves to his dinners and demonstrations with a timeless quality. The Father of Reform never lapses into the grandfather of the movement; his energy is that of the quick and not of the dead, and pursuing the normal courses of this inquiry for so long a time in his company, it is almost with a shock how one realizes that he too was mortal. Napoleon declared that when the kings of Europe heard of his death they would utter a hearty 'oof!' of relief at the news, and strangely enough one preserves much the same impression of Cartwright and his contemporaries—Burdett, Hobhouse and his colleagues—no less than those to whom his very name was the archtype of unreason and misrule. He had moved among them eager that they should be dominated by the same daemon that occupied himself. Naturally they objected, for no man cares to be driven even into courses that he may not find it difficult to approve, and for this reason they were never quite comfortable in association with him. Yet this was the selfsame quality which made his name a rallying point, and himself as an individual with extremely limited resources, a potent factor against an organized combination of wealth and authority that would have daunted numbers of men much more intellectually gifted than he. In the end he did not slay the giant; but when the monster stumbled to its knees, if credit be laid to personal achievement at all throughout

the stormy reaches of the Reform agitation, the laurel is surely his.

On September 24, sensibly and tranquilly conscious to the last, he died.

FINIS

. . . . . .

Yes, that's the end, curiously saddening. Naval occasions, militia excursions, county meetings, Old Bailey, the Crown and Anchor Tavern, the 'solitary horseman' in the Universal Suffrage agitation, the frosty polled figure acclaimed by vast congregations of the unenfranchised in the northern counties, the Court at Warwick—we have shared it all. Good-bye old man. I may work in a little peroration: Hazlitt, and 'the evening star set over a poor man's cottage'. You are worth it.

OCT. *Encounter*

In the train I took my seat before a boy—a mere child in appearance—whose destination was Rugby, a cap and a case on the rack bespoke it. There was a worldly-wise cut about his features—despite the boys' paper that he was reading—and when dinner came he arose gravely and passed out to the restaurant car. . . . After a while he returned, and soon his nose was in the paper and his fingers popping drops into

his mouth. 'At intervals he would take a small purse out of his pocket, and gravely drawing from thence a pound note folded eight times, smooth it out and gaze upon it with unctuous contemplation. . . .

Who was he? Why had his parents packed him off at this age when he should have been tucked in his own bed? How much had his parents set aside for his 'education'? Were they afraid—actually afraid—that with an elementary school education his chances in life would be retarded? . . .

There he sat, tiny, self-sufficient in the corner of the carriage as we raced down the Midlands. Night had long fallen. He drew the empty sweet bag from his pocket, and squinted in the shifting shadows to find a vagrant in the bottom. For all his grown-up air, his cap and leathern case combined, he was still a child. . . .

OCT. *Curriculum*

. Of lectures (and what a wealth there is!) I am taking Spenser, Miss Darbyshire on Seventeenth-Century Prose, and J. Livingson Lowes, Eastman Visiting Professor, on Chaucer.

Mr. Lowes is the author of the significant *Convention and Revolt in Modern Poetry*, and the bulkier and better known *Road to Xanadu*,

described as the best detective story of the century—a fascinating study (if a thought too long) of the cloud of influence, reading, and personal association affecting Coleridge in the fashioning of *The Ancient Mariner* and *Xanadu.*

We see a dapper, gowned figure mounting the platform. Alert American features, a brisk admonitory American finger, and an assertive voice full charged with a clipped, semi-Yankee accent. Weird from such a source to discover Chaucer, and to recognize the many and diverse by-paths of medieval learning travelled by the lecturer, and quite, I take it, unknown to most of us. I have no more to say about J. L. Lowes than this—a true scholar: a man of transcendent quality. . . .

OCT. 12. *F. R. Barry*

Without question, the main devotional interest of undergraduate life devolves around the figure of the Vicar of St. Mary's. There are other significant figures also. One cannot ignore the presence of Dr. L. P. Jacks, of Manchester College; of Dr. W. B. Selbie, of Mansfield; and of the work of successive Wesleyan ministers at the Memorial Church in New Inn Hall Street—Brash, Bodgener, and Roberts; but Barry, without prejudice, steps into the traditional line

at St. Mary's, stamped with that peculiar genius. A man with fire in his belly. . . .

See him at this moment as he mounts the rostrum steps—for it is eight o'clock of a Sunday evening, the first week of term, and he is opening the series of post-service meetings again—a figure of fun almost, with head loosely jolting on shoulders, and curiously simian features in addition. Row by row in gallery and chancel the lights flick out. At last he stands beneath the crowning illumination of the pulpit, so that every member of the great congregation may behold with certainty the uncouth sweep of arms, and listen with intent concentration upon the strangulated voice. Save one, he lacks every quality by which an orator is known. What is the secret of his power? For he can draw (and has drawn) a stream of noted publicists and ministers to address his audiences, commanding an allegiance achieved by no other figure in the university? Is it because he speaks frankly and at unexpected moments in the language of the common rooms? 'I don't want you to think that I have sold you a pup,' he announces when one of his star attractions has failed to turn up. And nobody does mind. As a whole he is transcendently more forceful than the long line of notables so solemnly ushered into his pulpit.

This is the night of the 'fresher' undergraduate

and undergraduette, sitting within these old walls for the first time, and he talks quietly about 'the fascinating bewilderment of Oxford life. . . . Undergraduate novels, bitter with the disillusionment of eighteen,' because of the unco-ordinated knowledge they are called upon to sustain. Why not, he suggests, try to find out first of all what life is really like. And how can this be accomplished without a living conviction?

The Christian tradition of Oxford? A Christian ideal of education—what do we mean by that? Of what significance is a tiny soul in a boundless creation? 'Things are what they are; but what are they?' Religion ought not to impinge upon history, or science, or botany, or upon any other department of knowledge. 'Do not ask your tutor,' he observes, to a ripple of laughter from the shadows, 'to teach you Christian mathematics, or Christian history, or Christian science. There is no such thing; but at the same time each of these departments by itself is without significance. It is a body of knowledge, requiring a scale of values beyond it—length, breadth, depth, height —from which to gather unity. A spiritual content imparting significance and proportion. . . .'

The uncouth arms are extended as he urges not to forget the consecration of prayer—'not the prayers you uttered at fourteen—"When I was a child, I spake as a child"', but other prayers

nevertheless. The tendency in Oxford was to accept second best, and he would challenge that position with a plea for character which every student must learn to hammer out for himself. . . .

The great bell in the dark tower overhead clamours nine. Faintly traffic sweeps the High. Walk later under Magdalen elms with F——.

OCT. 13. *A Walton Street Nest*

Exits and entrances. Furniture men staggering with pianos. A tale of woe from an adjacent landlady: her new lodger has jettisoned the pictures on the sitting-room wall. He cannot live with them. Nor can he abide the pictures on the landing outside his bedroom, still less the pictures in the bedroom itself. The tint of the outspread quilt jars some æsthetic sense. He intends to introduce a new one. At his orders all the chairs were sent out yesterday to be recovered with a new tapestry. Finally the rooms must be redecorated (though but newly done) to conform with his own tastes. . . .

All this might not have been so devastating (one gathers) did not the creature sleep with his hair bound in a net o' nights!

OCT. 18. *The Better Class*

In the cinema to-night two undergraduates plumped beside me, and tried to sit; for one, semi-drunk, in the act of lowering himself, crashed in the gangway, where he lay for a moment or two gurgling and grunting. When at last he did work into his seat he extended a hand and solemnly placed his fragment of ticket in my lap. 'Get you one-and-tenpence seat,' he said. 'Silly ass!' shouted his companion, 'can't you see he's got a seat?' 'He's got two—oh, good afternoon, good afternoon,' this in greeting to a figure on the screen. 'What have we come in here for?' he questioned suddenly. 'Silly ass!—to see the picture,' rejoined the other. Thereafter semi-drunk enlivened his stay by endeavouring to strike up an acquaintance with the programme girl. Presently in came a bunch of half a dozen others, all pretty well dosed up, and this lot hovered behind, making the air vociferous with cat-calls, indulging in horseplay, and generally imposing on the house their abominable company.

Abominable, their suave insolence! Abominable the presumption of the semi-drunk beside me towards the girl who was merely a programme girl, and therefore fitting object for his shafts. (I can see the same man behaving with a pleasant self-effacement in the presence of girls of his own

order.) Abominable the presumption that to be youthful, and to possess money is prerogative enough to pour out your sundry observations, scorn or approbation, over the heads of a multitude with only coppers to spend. Abominable the presumption upon service! 'What time does your show begin?' inquires one man of the attendant, in a tone the insolence of which would garner a smack on the nose in a mining village. 'The main picture, sir?' inquires the attendant....

Sir!!!

It took an hour, a parade around the dim cloisters of Magdalen, a cigarette, a deep chair in the new buildings, and a conversation about another century to recover a badly frayed temper. It was drizzling slightly, as I found the quad and the dim cloisters once again. Drizzle or fine? I could *not* remember when I entered. The abominable insolence!

. . . . .

If Will was schooled to be an officer in the army, would he not begin by trying to domineer over and command all who would submit to him? If Dick was to have his father's broad acres, how could he better prepare for the enjoyment of them, as things went, than by learning to drink, gamble, and box; by picking up stable slang; and becoming a connoisseur in 'dogs, horseflesh, and women'—as they had it—and by an early imitation of that reckless self-willedness which he had seen practised by his class at home? If James is for the Church, should he not learn to be combative when a boy; inasmuch as

he would have to contend against 'the world, the flesh, and—another antagonist—and in favour of tithes, preferments, and fat livings? And if Jack was preparing for the Navy, what so natural that he should practise with a bamboo, instead of a rope's-end, on the heads and shoulders of the king's subjects? Great folks . . . sent their sons to college, and they came there tainted with the vices of their order. . . .

Bamford heard that a hundred years ago in an inn a few miles out of Oxford, and he thought it sufficiently important to set it down in his recollections. 'Oxford never changes,' said the late Earl of Birkenhead, proud of his own association, and the surety. Perhaps he is right. Day after day, beneath my window, clatter young gentlemen 'schooling' to be officers in the army. The brisk click of hoofs runs down the thoroughfare, and if I am interested enough to peep through the window, there they go with sports coats, khaki riding-breeches, and puttees, carbines in buckets, and fingers disposing reins in the accredited fashion. 'Look at that damned fool X——,' said J—— as we watched them pass. 'He 's supposed to be a member of the Labour Club, and he can't get his heart out of *that*.'

Other times, other riders: girls, spick and span, in riding-breeches, etc., with attendant men. Horseflesh and women? As for the dogs in question, a few doors away an undergraduate pays ten shillings a week for his terrier . . . and

it is fed on material that many a poor woman in an industrial town would be delighted to serve up for her children.

Perhaps the most serious feature of 'class' social observances in Oxford is the insidious influence of such a condition upon the college servants, and those townspeople (Cowley excluded) directly dependent upon the university for support. It is remarkable to encounter so much be-sir-ing (a form of address not to be confused with ordinary politeness) after the independent temper of the mine; behaviour so much the mode that nobody seems to notice. There is a tradition of servitude as well as condition of demand upon service, sapping—it is everywhere apparent—the dignity of spirit a full-grown man, be he college servant or any other, should possess. . . .

OCT. 21. *The Peace Group*

Addressed the Peace Group at the Holts'. About thirty present. The discussion ranged chiefly around copartnership in industry—the introduction of a sense of responsibility into workmen who feel that they have no personal contact with the boards by which they are 'managed'.

OCT. 22. *Candidate*

To dinner with G. Wilson, whom I met at the

'Peace Group'. He is wondering whether to run for presidency at the next Union election.[1]

OCT. *Landladies*

'I have told Owen he must live within £200 at Cambridge.'—*Journal of a Somerset Rector*, in 1829.

A worm has turned, and released via the local and also the London press, a spate of controversy on the perpetual campaign waged between the landladies of Oxford and its undergraduates. Wherever men forgather, from the 'Oriel' to the 'Cadena', this is a white-hot topic of conversation. Idle women discussing their servants over tea-cups, are not at this moment more exacting (though one would anticipate a thought less blasphemous) than the undergraduate reviewing his relations with his landlady.

The first braw skirmishers are freshmen. They are threading the woods and with fierce shouting, discharging their pieces at the dour ranks of the enemy. It is a scattered fire, however, and in support advance the second-year men, tested in many a combat, and of a quality not to be denied. Lastly are the 'shock troops' in reserve, men of the third year, hard-bitten veterans, with level eyes, and cool, stinging address. . . .

What are the charges? The Delegacy of

[1] President, Trinity Term.

Lodgings—the institution dealing with rooms outside college—lends support to the inefficient and expensive conditions now obtaining. Every year (it is estimated) some eighteen hundred undergraduates set out to seek lodgings licensed by the Delegacy; yet it would appear that with this number as a permanent charge, there are only six hundred sets of rooms where, exclusive of meals and baths, the real rent is below £2 15s. a week. Lodgings are set up under the assumption that the body of this clientele are well-to-do, for of the total rooms licensed 30 per cent have a rent of over £3 10s. a week. Accommodation under £2 per week constitutes only 2½ per cent of the whole range of licensed lodgings. Democrats please note!

Such is the gravamen of the charge; but add to this all manner of irritations. Every man is compelled to conclude with his landlady a written agreement for one year. The Delegacy of Lodgings will not allow undergraduates to take unauthorized or unlicensed 'digs', while licensed 'digs' remain unlet. Perhaps, however, the real friction arises over what the landladies are pleased to term 'extras'. Reviewing the experience of the people I know I find that one man is charged two and sixpence a week for electric light; another is mulcted three and sixpence a week for gas—excluding the use of the gas stove. Another

friend of mine—by no means an habitual night-rake—is charged 'hall light' (a button of flame on the burner) if he happens to be out after 11 p.m. Another, who, in a flush of generosity poured out the remainder of a small jug of cream (a tea jug) into a saucer for pussy (which animal at the same time happened to belong to the landlady) was called upon to pay '2d. . . . milk for cat'. I remember L—— relating how, after the last tea in his lodgings, when he had asked for a little extra bread and butter, this duly appeared on the bill—'To three pieces, bread and butter'. These are common experiences, and could be amplified at great length. . . .

There are some landladies (though I have not met them) who appear to charge for furniture damages which are carried forward from year to year. For coal some charge 1s. per day, and the profit in this way may be gauged by the fact that in college coal charges run between three and four shillings a week. It must be remembered also that the undergraduate provides his own linen, sheets, cutlery, and china. Roughly the extras may be set out as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Household washing | 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per week |
| Light | 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. per week |
| Coal | 5s. to 7s. per week |
| Coal for cooking | 1s. to 2s. per week |

The other, the 'landlady', side presents its own particular plea. It is urged that a good deal of money has to be spent in effecting operations to conform with the Delegacy requirements respecting ventilation and sanitary amenities—lodgings being inspected by the Delegacy each vacation. Then there are delimiting regulations by which the landlady must abide. By rule, the door of the lodgings must be locked between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.; and except by special permission, only the landlady is allowed to unlock it. That means often sitting up until undergraduates come in at a time pretty nearly midnight. . . .

Landladies in the city have more to pay for their houses; some undergraduates are very untidy; they bring big parties of friends; the furniture suffers, and cleaning-up is a considerable item. Again, undergraduates have so many more 'wants' and more comfortable standards than working men; such being the case they should be expected to pay extra. . . .

. . . .

The battle goes forward. Lower down the road a German has ventured to complain of the quality of bacon served for breakfast. Whereupon the landlady swoops below, and returning with the raw material slams it on the breakfast

table before his astonished eyes: 'Now tell me to my face it 's rotten!'

Where will it all end?

. . . . .

As for me I have no complaint to lay. My landlady is a jewel!

OCT. 29. *Viva Voce*

So a period is set! This afternoon received a letter from an examiner to state that he and a colleague have been appointed to sit in judgment on 25 November, at 2.15 p.m. Will this be suitable for me?

*Solicitation*

Beggars abound, lurking in by-ways with soft insinuating voices. In the empty street you are suddenly conscious of a step skilfully adjusted with your own—the long stride of an undergrad—and a voice: 'Excuse me, sir . . . one moment, sir. . . .'

Pausing, one listens to the tale of 'down on me luck——' etc. But there is no health in the tribe—ever supplicating, and ever to be abased. They flourish after a fashion out of the generous largesse they are able to coax from generations of Oxford men; and there are times when it is

very bountiful. On Walton Street a week ago I saw an elderly itinerant musician saluted from an upper window. Two scraps of paper fell at his feet. He stooped and picked them up. One was a pound, and the other a ten-shilling note, flung down by two undergraduates above. He was so gratified by his good fortune that he touched his hat and shuffled off without completing his tune.

A time arrives, however, when one eludes this very conscious solicitation. It has become merely repellent. To-night in the dusk, leaving the Camera, and passing through the tree-shadowed alleyway between that place and the Turl, a becrutched figure advanced a step, and blocked the pathway, whining. There was not a soul in sight, and with a sudden revulsion from the bleary eyes and parched face, I slipped past without a word. A crutch crashed on the cobbles, and a thin curse followed. I wanted very much to run. There was something eerie about the time and place. Then at once upon turning the corner I saw a man emerging from the doorway of Lincoln, and was reassured. I suppose the cripple was a poor thing really. . . .

. . . . .

Then there are girls hanging around under the shadow of immemorial walls in a trade that is as

old as the world. I have seen them beneath the looming presence of the Ashmolean. There are times when one can observe a couple of undergraduates, a thought too eager of tone, hitting up an acquaintance, the prime purpose of which is to clear out of the public streets as soon as possible. A man will announce in hall: 'I 'm going to get a girl to-night'. It goes without saying he doesn't mean one of his own class—he has manners enough for that—and the result any casual observer may note if he cares to take a stroll of an evening in the public thoroughfare. . .

NOV. 12. *The Friends' Meeting House*

As Laurence Housman wandered, lonely as a cloud, in the rear of the assembling audience to-night, I approached him and said: 'Don't you know me?'

Of course he didn't. He set both hands to his glasses and made a good survey. I told him that I had once met Cape, his publisher, and we struck up a conversation. Housman very uneasy. He confided that an undergraduate audience always made him nervous. I assured him that one would not have guessed it, making some reference to the successful presidential debate. He appeared a little relieved, but his eye ranged uneasily over the gathering throng. . . .

Later, he spoke about Peace, and the speech was not a good one, raggy, a good deal too wordy. He made an appeal to professing Christians in the audience, and thereby nullified some measure of his plaint. There are few professing Christians in Oxford—very few in the meeting this night, one imagines, for, as far as I could observe, no one appeared (even under restraint) to be greatly moved. It is, of course, a matter of tactic. It was the wrong tactic with such an audience on such a night. . . .

NOV. 25. *Examination*

At half-past two entered the Schools in full regalia, *subfusc*, for examination. 'Wait down here,' suggested the porter, in the cold comfort of the lobby, 'they 'll ring for you when they 're ready'. A moment ago had caught a glimpse of a billowing gown as it vanished along the narrow gallery, and in the lobby beside me—or very near me—hovered a decidedly American figure. With a twinge of alarm I remembered that this was to be a *public* examination. Was he really to be my audience? The man sported horn-rimmed glasses, a face of delicate pink, and a very bald head. He ranged uncertainly around. . . .

Presently an attendant in the gallery made mysterious movements to his colleague upon the

floor, and thus I received my cue. 'Will you go up now, sir?' I moved off, hat in hand, and instantly, like an evil recollection, spectacles and bald head began to follow at my heels. Up the stairs his footsteps shuffled after mine. When I entered the room, and took a seat at a large table before the examiners, he dropped into a chair in the rear. Undoubtedly the audience. . . .

We were in discussing the thesis half an hour. Criticism, it appeared, devolved only upon points of detail and of style—the main lines approved. 'You don't like Pitt?' suggested one of the examiners. I had written that for Radicals 'the pilot that weathered the storm' was the author of the panic legislation of 1793, the Corresponding Society and Combination Acts, visiting upon the mildest critics of government the threat of execution, or the lingering purgatory of the hulks. 'The great man now no more' was the sponsor of one of the most modest examples of parliamentary reform ever presented to the House, and upon which, being once defeated, he never again risked his place or prestige in support. The 'heaven-born pupil of Prettyman' had effected an Irish Union with a policy of dragooning and corruption that stank in the nostrils of honest men, and for which he was ultimately responsible. He was the promoter of the fallacious 'sinking fund'; the friend of Dundas (now under accusation of

malversation); controller of a war finance by loan instead of by taxation; and in effecting the abandonment of cash payments by the Bank of England in 1797, responsible for the enormous inflation of the currency, and the 'paper-money policy', later so contemned by Cobbett . . . that, and much else. . . .

'I don't,' I answered.

'Will you tell us . . .' And so, question and answer, to the end. . . . They made their suggestions, and at length I arose, bowed, and left them. . . .

The stranger followed, and I halted in the corridor so that he should overtake me. 'Did you——?' I began. I was about to add: 'Did you get your money's worth?' when he broke in rather eagerly: 'I am an American professor. You had a good time. They seemed very pleasant'. Then almost breathlessly he poured out that he was attending lectures here, indicating subjects. By this time we had reached the foot of the stairs, and I was stripping off my gown. Then he made his farewell after handing me a pastille. Or do I dream about the pastille? . . .

FEB. *America*

Professor Macdougall opens at Manchester College with a series of lectures on 'Some Aspects of American Civilization'. A dignified figure, with long, not unhandsome, slightly equine features. A voice of some profundity. One feels that so equipped he will be able to make a little go a very long way. Really his opening lecture is most vivid and charming. He surveys broadly the American scene with a touch of the poet in his description—clouds sweeping up the open sky to the Golden Gate; the surprise Pueblo; the track of deer across the snow-covered tennis court. I was reminded of Edna St. Vincent Millay. A man not to be missed. . . .

FEB. 15. *The Mission*

It is ten minutes to eight, and at St. Mary's you may dribble into odd corners, if you please, or scramble over bodies in staircases, or survey rather hopelessly from the doorway, crowded galleries and chancel. Can one squeeze a little room? A very tall and restrainedly excited

undergraduate believes we may. In the chancel perhaps, and to the chancel we repair, though the pulpit looms a diminutive box in the middle distance. . . .

I drop into a seat beside the first pillar, where two undergraduettes are praying at length. I sit very still for three minutes . . . they are still praying. It is difficult to conceive that they are at all alive, and not effigies tricked out in cap and gown. Presently they arise, their long devotions concluded. . . .

Meanwhile, a thin, hopeful stream presents itself—polyglot, peculiar to the university: shrivelled dons with black-stuff gowns billowing amply around their withered limbs; men in the stark radiance of dress suits fresh from dinner; undergraduates in pullovers and flannels, or plus fours. A goodly sprinkling of Orientals. Young clerical students with fresh, ingenuous faces. Townsmen and women. Undergraduettes, self-sufficient as usual. A great crowd. Is it too much to assume that half the resident members of the university have assembled here to-night? Throughout the week the Press has acclaimed as with one voice: A GREAT OXFORD REVIVAL. . . .

Now men consider squatting in the chancel. 'May we sit down here?' asks one. 'Yes,' responds a flurried steward, clutching his handful

of hymn sheets, 'but for God's sake, give the archbishop room to pass!' 'That 's all right.' They squat . . . meanwhile the vicar roams, noting the disposition of the people, and the possibility of further accommodation. Almost on eight the archbishop brushes past my chair as he enters the church to prepare for the service. Rotund, cherubic, he whistles very softly between his teeth as he hastens to don purple cassock and large gilt cross. . . .

He takes the pulpit, and his decisive, eminently capable voice penetrates every quarter of the building. Who will deny the quality of this man? Laski has said somewhere that Religion in the hands of men like Dean Inge is part of the ordinary tactic of Conservatism. Here is a prime dignitary of the English Church, for a long period a pillar of the Workers' Educational Association, and now a foremost protagonist in the reconciliation of Religion with Democracy. He tells us that Christianity through whatever form we may possess it, has been perpetuated only by the Church, and by the Church only will continue to be preserved. Let the disappointed not sever themselves from the work of the Church: they should remain infusing new life into the body. What he would now enjoin upon his hearers may, he conceives, appear pedestrian; but small gestures of witness are often the most

important. Let them consider attendance at communion and in the college chapels, seeking out the chaplains for advice concerning matters spiritual. . . .

He invokes Garibaldi—'I am going out from Rome. I offer neither quarters, nor provisions, nor wages; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles, death. Let him who loves his country with his heart and not with his lips only, follow me'—as a paraphrase of the appeal of Christ. If we would but stream out after Him, there might be a Kingdom of God in Oxford to-morrow. Let there be a personal decision. . . .

One leaves the building vaguely disquieted. Why? The quality of the evangelist? A little. Is it regrettable that such a voice, calm, level, emphatic; and the ponderous figure, devoid of gesture, should remind one so forcibly of a company chairman addressing the annual meeting of shareholders? There is a picture, distant, yet no less vivid, of an old man with the white flame of a beard tossed against the frogging of his dark uniform; pale waxen features in which a pair of eyes flickered like coals; lean fingers fluttering over crowded benches—General William Booth to wit. Approaching Magdalen tower and the elms, one almost wishes that one could not remember General William Booth. . . . Emotional restraint—or was it emotional poverty?

—like a web over everything? A film of middle-class training, of 'good form', of things 'not done', defeating the power and the glory of a profound religious discovery. There were no *Hallelujahs!* Apparently the word has been misplaced; and more regretful still, the emotional fervour of which the word was but a symbol. . . .

Emotional poverty.

### *Credit*

Yes, one needs money. If one is to appreciate Oxford, £250 per annum is regarded as a fair average figure of outlay. There should be no real pinching on that, with provision for travel in vacation, reading parties, and the like. (It must be understood that I am speaking of Oxford as it is—not as it might be.)

Obviously, much more than £250 per annum is spent by great numbers of men in Oxford. It has been alleged that the bad debts of Oxford tradesmen stand at the colossal sum of a quarter of a million pounds. It goes without saying that I have no means of computing the indebtedness of undergraduates to the tradespeople of the city, though I hardly think that the tradespeople in question will be among the first to complain.

I should imagine that they get their money in the end, if not from the hands of undergraduates, then from their parents.

The real trouble is, that merely by giving his name together with that of his college, a freshman can walk out of any shop with pictures, cigarettes, fancy cushions, Créme de Menthe, or what you will, beneath his arm. It is all so overwhelmingly easy. Ask, and it shall be given unto you! And in this fools' paradise—until he recovers some sort of poise—the undergraduate continues to subsist. At times (while 'playing the game', one presumes) he contrives to forget. But the tradesman never forgets. And Nemesis peeps at the end. . . .

I have never found any difficulty in securing credit whenever I wanted it. As a test case I decided to order certain goods in my first year and to await developments. For two years invoice after invoice came, until at the end of that time I tired of the sight of the envelopes and paid up the account. . . .

All things considered, the long-credit system is a foolish one. It imposes too slight a discipline upon the expenditure of money. I have little patience with the inveterately woolly 'hey and ho! for jocund youth!' There is a time to put away childish things, and the university is a place where an undergraduate should learn

(among other things) a sense of social responsibility in the spending of money. . . .

PLEASE DO NOT ASK FOR CREDIT
AS A REFUSAL SOMETIMES OFFENDS

What is sauce for the coalfields may be anathema in the High, and the foregoing notice is a trifle deadly in more than one respect; but there might be immeasurably worse things than that set up in the places where undergraduates do their bartering. . . .

FEB. 18. *Mr. Jas. Maxton*

'Where is the *great man*? Let 's see him!' Thus a 'hearty', blocking momentarily the swing doors of the Union Hall. The crowd thickens around the doorway, for there is no further room on the floor of the building, and heated, bepuzzled stewards are striving in vain to maintain an avenue for the speaker to enter the hall. 'Let 's see him!' vociferates the 'hearty' fresh from dinner, and on the moment a slight figure eases through. There is a glimpse of bowed shoulders, a bank of dark, faintly greying hair, pale features with a touch of emaciation. This is he, who, in the words of the chairman, now occupies the place that Keir Hardie once held in the affections of the Labour Movement. . . .

As he moves forward to the box, and leans upon it in the approved manner, one perceives in physical attributes at least, no Hardie. A first impression suggests a somewhat meaner figure. I remember Hardie clearly in one of his last descents upon the mining areas. We boys dallied on a bench in front of the meeting, a little overawed by the snowy, Garibaldian presence, and that capacity to rally an intense allegiance in our elders. To this hour the Garibaldian connotation remains; but what connotation has this lantern jaw as he shakes his head knowingly in the face of his audience? A Tappertit? . . .

Tappertit, after 'Phiz'—belted waist, skirted coat, horse pistols, and a rough and ready democratic thesis to hand? A presence undoubtedly —speaking. None of the sacrifices he has been called upon to make have ever furnished the means of opening an address to an audience of this character. But he is prepared to take a risk. He will begin with *fellow-workers*!

When the 'fellow-workers' have spent their laughter, he holds them in the hollow of his hand —the stern unbending Tories with the rest. He weighs his audience cannily as he proceeds to the ills of the economic body—over-production and under-consumption, as he puts it. 'Fair play' for the bottom dog; the 'caddish' behaviour of the prosperous, content to allow vast masses of

the people to a life of grinding poverty, without ever raising a finger on their behalf. He is able to touch the consciences of his auditors profoundly. In this hall of historic memories he stalks, terribly vocal—penury, distress, and frustration incarnate. In less than an hour one will be discussing this speech, or more lightheartedly booking up 'Hassan', O.U.D.S.; but for a moment the charge drives home, and in silence he relates a story not often encountered in quite this way. . . .

In conclusion, a particular appeal. 'In the eyes of Oxford and the world—Oxford represents something.' . . . aside: 'myself I have never quite known what it was——' And Oxford roars with delight. . . .

No . . . not Tappertit. . . .

MAR. 8. *From a College Window*

No man (even with a fellowship) ought to stay in Oxford for more than ten years. The tendency is to become 'epicures of life', and to forget living, to become men 'as books walking'. In so many ways life in Oxford is out of touch with reality. Mentions an undergraduate who, when asked what he would like to do, answered that he would like to be the head of a college!—F. R. Barry, at St. Mary's.

MAR. 9. *Men and Women*

While I cannot lay claim to any particular order of omniscience, I strongly suspect that in Oxford 'sex' is discussed more freely and persistently than in any other place in England. Externally the portents would prove very little: men and women are domiciled in their respective colleges; they appear together only seldom in public thoroughfares; regulations impose an adequate chaperonage (tea in rooms, for example); and the monkish rite runs even on the river, though I have observed on more than one occasion the not wholly inadvertent blundering of a punt load of females at the water entrance of 'Parsons Pleasure'.

Yes, externals are deceptive. 'You know,' communicated one don's wife, 'my husband is really quite unreliable in his assessment of these problems. He fancies that men are pretty much the same as in his own college days, when a little group met regularly, and women were very rarely mentioned.' She sighed, deploring the motor car in undergraduate hands.

There are, of course, portents in Oxford that are merely symptomatic of the generation. A great crowd of presumably intelligent men and women will welcome with delight the drinking scene in the second act of *Fallen Angels*, and

counter your criticism with the *jejune*: 'Well, if they really want, why shouldn't they?' I do not believe this attitude is peculiar to Oxford; but there are tendencies which Mr. Roger Clarke has pointed out more amply in his *A Future for Public Schools*, the effect in early training of the cleavage between 'spiritual love' and physical lust that in many cases makes a satisfying relationship with a woman impossible in later life. One meets the discursive and faintly amusing semi-drunk in a café who will persist in accosting a girl—a total stranger—on the rather flimsy basis that he has 'seen her first', and is at last lugged away by indulgent colleagues. Or the more revolting order of bawdy-mindedness. I can recall one late evening in the train out of Paddington for Oxford. Besides myself, there were four undergraduate members of the university in the carriage—three Indians and an English public school boy. A slightly tipsy Reading man entered, and from time to time this fellow endeavoured to inveigle, with a thin flow of indecent comment, we others to attention. The Indians smiled nervously, drew within themselves, and cocked apprehensive eyes over the battlements. They were silent. With my usual lack of restraint in such matters I scowled. At length the public school boy made his contribution with a wealth of pungent, bawdy

observation, the like of which I have rarely encountered in the course of my industrial career.

Occasionally, an 'expert' descends. A fortnight ago it was Dr. Norman Haire at the Labour Club, with an advanced point of view in the consideration of sexual problems. I did not attend, because I have grown not a little impatient of mere expediences presented as workable solutions. I am not in the least excited about 'companionate marriage'. I find it very difficult to believe that an ordinary man, who cannot assess in the course of a reasonable courtship the intellectual and temperamental qualities of the desirable one, is in the least likely to be helped by getting into bed with her. The proposition is far too deeply tainted with that diversion without responsibility, which is the mark of the roué and the harlot throughout the ages. Also, I deprecate profoundly a consideration of 'sex' as distinct from personality. It is not an independent function, to be treated independently; but an element involved in the development of the whole man and woman—individually and socially.

But the Christian undergraduates of the Labour Club, in arms against the proposals voiced by Dr. Haire, are to-night arranging a meeting in Ruskin. Shall I drop in?

Later. . . .

I went after all. A good deal of plain speaking. What are they saying? 'Love is only achieved when the complete personality is given to the beloved wholly; behind the consummation of love must lie finality. If it is only a temporary union the whole act is debased.' A woman social worker talks about prostitution—'already mentioned as one of the ways tried-out by those who wish to solve the problem apart from God. . . .' She believes that prostitution 'could not go on if people thought about it. If all of us went away from this meeting really thinking about it something would happen to it in Oxford. The worst thing about it is not the traffic of it, but the holding of personality cheap. The prostitute is defrauded and knows it, and she defrauds men. Prostitution has always to be paid for. The prostitute pays, the man pays, and society pays. . . .'

The discussion covers a wide field. A declaration by an American undergraduate to the effect that he has lived both kinds of life—the way of free expression and the way of Christianity—evokes from the back of the hall an ironical: 'Tell me the old, old story!' One man advocates companionate marriage, since ordinary marriage is impossible to most men to-day before they are thirty. 'Young men have prostitution as an

outlet for sex,' declares one undergraduette. 'Young women have not even that. They have either to marry or face life without sex at all, and without the real companionship of men.' 'The false, the organized Christianity,' says another, 'results in opposing just those measures which might prevent prostitution. You may say you would introduce prostitutes to Christ; I would introduce them to anti-septics—or perhaps both might be applied together.'

We hear that there are remedies the Labour Party would apply were it not for the Catholic vote.

Canon Streeter winds up. . . . 'Any society which is going to work has to have principles thought out in cold blood, and stick to them when the blood is not cold. The Ten Commandments have a certain advantage in that they have a staying power; they have a certain survival value for the race. A good deal of our sexual morality does not come from the Hebrews, but from the Græco-Roman civilization—when it was the reaction from complete licence. We are still paying the bill for the experiment made on the lines of the speaker a fortnight ago. . . .'

We pass into the outer darkness of Walton Street, still talking. . . .

. . . . .

After transcribing the above, I find in Mr. Gerhardi's *Memoirs of a Polyglot* this credential:

> It is the casual love of the miller's daughter which sheds an immortal light over Chaucer's picture of the miller and the mill, so different from the fastidious essayings of the weaker-sexed artists, where solitary intellectual love for a congenial woman robs them of unrest, and makes their work exchange vitality for placidity.

—and I wonder. . . .

*My year is in the yellow leaf—*

Was Byron weakly sexed?

*I waive the quantum of the sin,*
*The hazard of concealing,*
*But oh, it hardens all within,*
*And petrifies the feeling.*

Did Burns lack vitality? What exhilaration of the 'casual' is this?

MAY. *From a Distance*

The last term of all, and I am held up by indisposition (it matters not what). A fortnight —perhaps three weeks will elapse before my return. . . .

MAY. *Convalescent*

From this Yorkshire watering-place, the hard pace of its promenades, the paucity of its book-

shops, the slow wash of the sea, one views Oxford through a telescope. One gleans a little news from the *Manchester Guardian*, and at week-ends the *Observer* and *Sunday Times*. Galsworthy will come and go, and Einstein will walk the familiar streets. Recovery is still slow. I put on badged blazer to-day, and I made some sort of link between laburnum and seaweed, but the effort was rather pathetic, and I put the blazer off again. Einstein will have gone when I arrive. . . .

. . . . .

Inquiry to-day: 'Are you head of your form at Oxford College?'

JUNE. *Return*

Returning to Oxford direct from the astringent saline air to the green bower that the university is, makes every street a garden. Everywhere chestnut candles are scattering their delicate petals—there is a perennial carpet at the turn of Walton Street. Everywhere the scent of green growing things. And what of Einstein? He came, lectured, and departed. S—— and J——, who are familiar with German, attended; but —without being utter fools—were unable to follow him. I like the homelier touch of a college gardener. 'I saw a pleasant little fellow, with,

you know, a funny black hat on. He stopped and he said: "What is the name of this here little yellow flower?' Aye, it was Einstein right enough.'

One story is too good to be lost. Discussing international politics and his own achievement he remarked: 'If I am proved to be right, the Germans will say: "He was a German", and the Frenchmen, "He was a Jew"; if wrong, the Germans will say, "He is a Jew", and the Frenchmen, "He is a German!"'

JUNE. *The Public School Boy*

'How old are you?' he asked.

'That,' I replied, 'for a gentleman, is rather a difficult question to answer.'

He was checked and a little confused at that—meanwhile we were passing through the gate of 'Yatscombe', whither we had been taking tea with the Murrays. After tea we had skirted the wild wood in the rear of the garden, and lingered a little with due admiration of Lady Mary's azaleas—but in a general company. Now we were alone. We set our faces to the descent, towards Oxford. . . .

'What I mean is——' he continued, 'I am wondering what men like you really think about us public school boys.'

'What is your school?'

He said Charterhouse. 'What do you think of us?' he persisted. I ventured that it was rather difficult to give more than a general impression. What was a representative type of public school boy? Jolyon Forsyte? Young Woodley?

He repudiated the last suggestion with some vehemence. 'Give me general impressions,' he persisted. I laughed, for these were almost entirely domestic. I observed that the public school undergraduate possessed the sweetest tooth of any class of men that I had ever met—a tuck-shop tooth. Did he regard such criticism merely footling?

'Go on,' he said, 'I find it interesting.'

I pointed out that the bearing of cakes through the public thoroughfare as one is able to observe it in Oxford, is an occupation relegated to the women of mining townships. 'In a word, the public school boy is eminently at home in the world; and eminently lost at home. . . . Let me announce that I had to come up to Oxford to behold for the first time in my life young men strolling arm in arm together. It wasn't very disturbing, of course; but it made one vaguely uneasy. Other than in gesture of assistance, the Davids and Jonathans of the coalfields would scorn such effeminate conduct. They would

point out—somewhat rudely perhaps—that if they wanted a cuddle they 'd go to the right place to find it. That is why I cannot appreciate the character (is it in *Sinister Street*?) who, marking the strong flow of women into Oxford during Eights, or something, observes: "Isn't it indecent?" All that I can say is, that it wouldn't appear indecent to me.'

'I am not sure that I agree with him,' he said slowly. 'Go on.'

'There is, you see (continued I), in the atmosphere of a mining area a peculiar tempo—intense and passionate, almost on a plane of military campaigning. The miner's job is so dangerous. When he leaves home of a morning he is never too certain how he will cross the threshold at the shift's end—an apprehension he shares with his wife and the rest of the family. He needs renewal at the shift end, that of the hearthstone, and a fuller association than that afforded by men. I should make the same objection to the public school system that I should make to the barracks system; it isn't good for men to be segregated in disassociation with womenfolk. I cannot subscribe to an *Alma Mater*. The phrase has no significance for me. Our motherhood is indivisible. . . .'

'Of course from an early age we are conscious that we shall have to attend school. It doesn't

seem so very terrible . . . we think it worth while. Go on.'

'Then I resent the presumption of authority by the public school boy—the conclusion that he is destined to become a leader of the people: implication—that "the likes of us" will follow.'

'I 'm thinking of the Indian Civil Service,' he tenders. 'Isn't a capacity for leadership of some use there?'

'Possibly. Assuming a measure of consent in the Indian people. What I do object to really is the whole class basis of public school education: lop-sided, unequal, anti-democratic—the breeding ground of snobbery.'

'I don't know. At school one of the first things we learn to do is to serve others.'

'Fagging?'

'Oh, yes. That involves work you might regard as menial.'

'But on a given plane. The humblest fag, skating about with tea-cups would scorn to regard himself in a class with the butcher-boy "townie". Sorry the menial work there! The public school elevates wealth against the dignity of human beings as such, a standard of values that I cannot for a moment admit. . . .'

Thus the talk proceeds down Boars Hill into the city. Have I effected the least impression? . . .

He is very pleasant about it all; invites me to

his rooms that he may send me away with a book. I handle his collection of weapons, pocket and horse pistols, oriental swords, a long bow or two. A number of rare books are close at hand. I peep in these. We drink. And he waves me through the gateway on the best of terms. What is he really thinking? . . .

I remember a chance sentence. . . . 'You never can tell what a public school boy *is* thinking. . . . He will discuss with you, and in the end. . . .'

JUNE 6. *The Degree Ceremony*

The great day dawns. Bursars and shopmen have gathered in their charges: item: £7 10s., college dues; item: £2 2s., university dues; item: one piece of gold, by tradition due to porter, really a treasury note for £1; item: black silk gown, £8 10s.; item: blue silk hood, tipped with ermine, £2 15s.; total: £21 17s.—and we are ready for the ceremony.

The porter takes the gown, and so, off, *subfusc* in blazing sunshine — auspicious radiance! — to lunch with the Dean in the Senior Common Room.

There are five of us: a lively freckled 'honourable'; a mining engineer, who has worked two years at the coal face; a man with an alert, legal sort of countenance; and another man,

indeterminate. The Dean — a doyen of deans — rosy, pleasant, with a soft mellow voice, presides. Than he, I cannot imagine what the Dean of a great college should be like.

It is cool in the Common Room. Silver gleams on the dark polish of the table. One breaks a roll, and the crumbs scatter duplicate upon the shining surface. The men-servants move noiselessly around. The courses come and go. The bottle passes. A flicker of conversation plays from the ceremony to Grock, from Marie Lloyd to the ceremony. With the coffee we are discussing R. C. Sheriff, who is coming up next term to read an honour's course. Can he be persuaded to pull an oar? . . . At last the coffee stands cold and in dregs. The cigarette butts are pressed into extinction. It is time to be away, and we hearken diligently to some slight instruction. . . .

Outside the Divinity School groups of the begowned hover, not without a little strained laughter with sudden acquaintances. But before all else there is a roll to be signed. 'This way, gentlemen, please. Senior degrees round the corner, please.' I halt before a ledger, take a pen, prepare to write, when a plaintive voice assails me: 'Wait-a-min-ute . . . wait-a-min-ute. You 're signing under the B.Sc.'s'. 'Does it matter?' I answer flippantly. . . .

A moment and the book is ready. I sign, and pass outside, halting this time within the shadow of the Sheldonian where the degrees are to be conferred. A worried minor official flits from group to group. 'Will you please take your seats, gentlemen?' This suppliant learns that we are waiting for the Dean. 'Them deans!——' the accusative voice tails away. . . .

Now we are sitting beneath the sweep of Wren's roof. Here Wellington was installed in 1833. 'Is man an ape or an angel?' An echo too of Disraeli. . . .

*Supplicat* sit, rather cram-jam, in chairs ranged upon either side of the Vice-Chancellor's place. In the galleries, alive with spectators, I recognize M——, and the honest Yorkshire face of S——. I make some observation to my neighbour on the left, but he rakes me with a gloomy eye and will answer only in a monosyllable. A foreign figure presses on my right, but henceforward I am dumb. I will not risk another snub. . . .

When the Vice-Chancellor, preceded by his mace-bearer and accompanied by the Proctors arrives, we stand. Follows a slight fusilade of Latin, and he sits still becapped while the Proctors deliver the names. First there is a Doctor of Music, and then in droves, a presentation by the College Deans of aspirant B.A.'s. In batches of four they kneel before the stern, black and crimson

figure on the dais. At his hands they receive permission to perform their duties, reading and disputing, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. A New Testament glances lightly from one head to another:

. . . *in nomine Domini, Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*

With the plaintive *Sancti* they rise, and pass out to be fully gowned. Thus file after file it continues, until all the B.A.'s of both sexes—sprightly young women dominate the gangway—and the last *Sancti* has been delivered. Then, to a burst of clapping, the whole group appears flooding the main door. . . .

'The Dean of ——' I hear the college called. It is my turn. One presses forward, bows thrice—once to the Vice-C., and once each to the Proctors—listens to a Latin invocation, glances for a moment into a pair of stony, impersonal eyes, bows quickly, for the invocation has stopped, retreats until others of the order have been called together; and then, receiving *en masse* a further charge, we pass into the full sunlight of the Broad, where, sure enough, the college porter awaits, gown over shoulder. One lifts a chin. One feels his fingers fumbling at one's breast—'These things are always difficult'. Now it is assumed, and a pound for that service has passed

from my pocket to his. At last the thing is accomplished. One floats around vain as a peacock in all this splendour. Does it billow slightly? . . .

JUNE. *The Education of the Whole Man*

This phrase I cull from Dr. Jacks, but after that, I forswear all obligation. There is no more saddening aspect of academic life than the stupidity of wise men, and the spectacle of Dr. Jacks I find extremely saddening. The curse of social inequality, as we perceive it, is the dual system of education implicit in the public school system. When Dr. Jacks looks forward, this is what he sees:

> There is one type of English education which illustrates in a remarkable manner both the new conception for which I plead and the old conception from which I would break away. I allude to our great Public Schools. I attribute their vitality—never so great as now—to the fact that they have steadily kept 'the whole man' in view as their ultimate objective. They know what they are aiming at. The whole man means for them the English gentleman, and it would be hard to find a better meaning for the term. . . .[1]

From the public schools he turns to another section of society with a pronouncement no less decisive:

> Let the young (says he, speaking of the 'dole') rise up in their millions, and tell the cowardly bribers to

[1] *The Education of the Whole Man*, by L. P. Jacks.

their faces that they will die of hunger rather than touch the poisonous thing.[1]

We recognize that charge. The terms are too familiar, and with Dr. Jacks, as with the 'Gloomy Dean', we have little difficulty in recognizing the objective. The vessels of wrath in question are the working classes; and particularly those young people who have the misfortune not to be maintained in the select private schools of the country. The two quotations are correlative, and a pretty commentary upon the limitations of the academic mind.

For there are two worlds: one of quiet libraries, of excellent food, of lazy Common-Room chatter, of attractive gardens (tilled not by degree men, but by masters of the art of gardening)—another world of stilled pulley wheels, of coal-choked sidings, of women weeping over empty purses, of the slow shuffle of feet across the Exchange lobbies. There are some people who do not realize that while between these two worlds a great gulf is set, it is yet a gulf annihilated by the imagination. The amazing patience, long suffering, applied compassion of the common people! The unfailing good humour! Working intimately with them, no feature is more definitely pronounced than their habit of strict self-reliance—

[1] L. P. Jacks in the *Daily Mail*, quoted *Public Opinion*, 2 January 1931.

a prevailing independence of outlook. But how could one anticipate that L. P. Jacks, M.A., D.D., D.Litt., editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, and Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, should be conversant with that?

Now what of the whole man?

We too often fall into the fallacy that the education of the whole man devolves upon the interpretation of calligraphic symbols. An incapacity to set down ideas upon paper, or an inability to indulge in sophisticated conversation need not signify that hopeless ignorance we are wont to conclude. What we do leave out of consideration is the quality of a valid experience.

There is many an old nurse who knows more of infant psychology than many a practising professor.[1] Every miner gathers as an integral condition of his occupation an exceedingly valuable body of knowledge, and that is why before a well-documented and expert plea for the establishment of steel props in the workings, he can advance a convincing case for the retention of wooden ones. The why and wherefore of that business does not matter at the moment; but in the course of the controversy the miner has a really valuable contribution to make. . . .

Perhaps one of the most striking features of

[1] I have in mind an 'expert' psychologist who, interrogating a nervous undergraduate, began: 'Now, Mr. ——, please forget that I am a psychologist . . .!'

university training is the total gap that one is able to observe in respect of manual labour. I am convinced that in many and varied subtle forms this deficiency obtrudes. Read the reminiscences of an average intelligent don to encounter a wistful apprehension of the job where one is able to do things with one's hands. He flutters an Elizabethan page, and reads perhaps a declaration like this: 'I must have the gentlemen to haul and draw with the mariners, and the mariners with the gentlemen. . . . Let us show ourselves to be one company'. He sighs. All serene for that master-mariner. 'Drake, he 's in his hammock an' a thousand miles away——'

Thus the don will halt before his window watching lorries unload, marking (and perhaps setting down upon paper), the easy play of muscle or the robust enjoyment with which the hefty fellows dismiss their task. Or he climbs Boars Hill, and over a convenient stile broods upon the ploughman topping the rise and disappearing with a whistle upon his lips and his strong hands firm upon the shafts. He would find, he feels, some sort of completion in the other man's job. And whistling too! Constitutional documents, or Old English textual criticism, is hardly approached that way. . . .

No man has realized completion without some measure of skilled occupation for the fingers, not

in terms of golf or tennis (those selfish games), but of real craftsmanship. Linked with that conception are the ruder, essential tasks, jobs somehow considered in this university as not at all menial for others, but much too menial for ourselves. I do not envisage a return to the Middle Ages: the medieval scene has gone for good; but I am assured that in the community life of our large universities there should be an allocation of the humbler services to the undergraduates themselves. What is to prevent an undergraduate from blacking his own boots, save lack of habit in doing so, or mere laziness? What is to prevent an undergraduate from serving in turn at dinner? (He would discover at least the difficulty of conveying soup!) What is to prevent an undergraduate from handling his own luggage? For a station of its size, serving a community with more hefty young fellows to the square mile than any place in the country (barring Aldershot), it has always appeared to me that the porters cluster about the entrance in overwhelming numbers. What indeed?

I perceive a thin, insistent voice. It reiterates, benevolent employment for college servants, for shopkeepers, for railway and other porters. And I am not convinced.

. . . . .

The games fetish, conveyed from the public

schools, is not so deeply rooted as it was, but it is still sufficiently strong to minimize all other physical activity save in terms of oars or of running shorts. It is quite the acknowledged thing to scatter perspiration about the parks, and to be demeaned by being compelled to nail and rope up one's own books. Once, in company with a couple of dons, neither of whom might be suspected of Conservative leanings, I threw out a suggestion that colleges should organize compulsory undergraduate manual labour. The idea was not a new one (Ruskin made his own experiment last century), but both, I fancied, started a little. 'How would you begin?' said one. I suggested kitchen gardens, and the idea was politely pooh-poohed away. Kitchen gardens, forsooth! They enlarged on the exhilaration of competitive effort.

But the whole question of gardens is not so ridiculous as that. In the north, among miners, there is often definite competition in the productive capacity of what little soil they have. Such an approach is to misread the springs of really creative effort. I grow runner beans in a garden in Yorkshire, not because I wish to outdo my neighbour over the fence, but because I like growing (and with my fellow *hearties* of the university) eating runner beans. It is not essential that human energies should be organized

with an assumption of antagonism. I cannot help thinking that a good deal of wanton destruction in the university might be eliminated if each college were to boast a joiners' shop, where a man might try his hand at a chair, or as one is able to do at home, to fashion a comparatively simple set of bookcases. Furniture might possess an additional significance, and, much more important, release to fruitful purpose a great deal of the simply fatuous energy now displayed.

. . . . . .

The wider bearing of 'the whole man' is of tremendous importance. In the old days a Grand Tour crowned a university career; but that was far away and long ago, and an organized dalliance on the Continent with the grand assumption that this completed a course of education, is not altogether eliminated.

So far, let the Grand Tour proceed, but with the consciousness that the economic individualism of the last century is a dead letter. Russia has burst through, and for good or ill, we shall not escape the dynamic that drives her into the third decade of the revolution. In spite of our own industrial development the fashion is a somewhat new one; and while I recognize no virtue in growing two machines where only one grew before, the experiment moves upon a plane unforeseen

by Mr. Macaulay. It arises not merely in challenge of our economic structure; but of our educational system as well. Take this scrap of dialogue from the *Diary of a Communist Undergraduate*:

I had a look at the shepherd. He was quite a young fellow, and I asked him: 'What 's the book you 're reading?' He handed it to me. It was Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*.

'Why, do you understand all this?' I blurted out.

'Why not?' said the shepherd cheerfully. 'I wouldn't be reading it otherwise.'

'Where did you get it?'

'At the U.A.F.W.' (Union of Agriculture and Forestry Workers).

'Why, are you a member?'

'Of course I 'm a member. All the shepherds, even if they are seasonal workers, belong to the Union. Did you think shepherds weren't human beings at all? Who are you?'

'I 've just finished the secondary school, and I 'm now preparing for the university.'

'What faculty?'

'I 'm not sure yet. The lit, I suppose.'

'I 'm on the phys-maths.'

I stopped with surprise. 'How do you mean?'

'Well, it 'll be my second year next winter.'

'But then—you 're a shepherd.'

'Well, what about it? In the summer I 'm a shepherd. In the winter I 'm a student.' . . .

What then? We might observe that vacations were more fruitfully spent in Leeds than the Lido, and that a definite alliance between the craft of the hand and that of the head were the

credential of 'the whole' student of the next generation. . . .

. . . . .

A further word. Educational privilege is doomed. Every event points to the whole course of education as the monopoly of the State, and absolutely free, with equality of opportunity for every one of its children. That Oxford University will occupy a place in such a system I have no manner of doubt; but that the position will not be assumed without some elimination of prevailing values is equally apparent. The least of her virtues are those priorities derived from what Mr. Tawney calls 'the strong sanctity of possessions,' and the fear of social stigma. Such may be eliminated without regret. The fellowship, the heritage of learning, will remain.

*Retrospect*

This is the last of the packing, and apart from odd catalogues, old razor blades, undergraduate journals flaming for a dear brief season of beauty, etc., one clears out generally. It seems a dim and distant hour in which I first sat with the Warden and a colleague of his, and the pair discussed (over my body, so to speak) my future course of action. They dallied with Languages. I remember remarking: 'Was it not the Emperor

Charles who declared that to learn a new language was to acquire a new soul?' and recalling the somewhat startled glance that flashed between the two elder men. I considered (poor fool!) such to be the habit of conversation in academic circles. One tossed from point to point these gleaming bubbles of wisdom. In this case, far from tossing a bubble, I appeared to have dropped a brick. They murmured a polite—but none the less hasty —assent, and later as I passed to the door I observed among the ruck of papers upon the table a volume by P. G. Woodhouse in active use. . . .

The rag-bag of recollection:

A glimpse of an undergraduate sitting one night upon his own hearthstone, decked out in a girl's toggery—dress, silk stockings, etc. Why? I did not probe into his perversion. N.B. There was no Fancy Dress Ball. . . .

A deadly hour, when by my own mistake, I blundered into a lecture on Anglo-Saxon, or some such monstrosity; and sweating with impatience, I abominated it (the lecture), the lecturer, and most of all myself for lack of moral courage to arise, gather up my gown, and sweep out of the hall. . . .

The first punting bout on the Cherwell: groping for the bottom, the appalling grip of the muddier reaches of the bed, and the triumph—in spite of cruel deviations—of taking the craft for a couple of miles or so without a ducking. My one positive achievement in Oxford. . . .

An encounter beneath the chestnuts in Walton Street when I was very gravely informed by a freshman (who knew no better) that for a fortnight he had mistaken me for the president of the Union. . . .

A recollection of that scion of the aristocracy, who, having suffered assault at the hands of unknown assailants, and carrying around a ripe black eye as a souvenir, finding comfort from a W.E.A. scholarship man: 'That 's nothing me lad to what you *will* get in the Revolution!' . .

The enchantment of the countryside at any point of that bowl in which Oxford is set; more particularly the afternoon upon Boar's Hill, when I beheld the city lit from stage to stage through interstices of a breezy cloud: a shaft of strong sunlight now upon the camera and St. Mary's, now upon Christ Church, and shifting a moment or two later to Magdalen and the poplars. . . .

Sooner or later—with the possible exception of Mr. G. B. Shaw, whose beard quivers electrically at the very name—all the more notable figures of Literature, Politics, and Affairs, contrive to visit Oxford. Of these, I have heard a great number, and only my periodic and incurable laziness prevented me from hearing the Sitwells, the Russells, Hilaire Belloc, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others. Thus I missed Beverly Nichols, who came down to address the Union in what was, I think, a Presidential Debate, and who from his petulant behaviour in the discussion left no very favourable impression upon the minds of my friends who attended.

In one of the first terms I heard Commander Kenworthy engage Mr. Robert Boothby in debate. It was a snowy night, and the gallant commander did not arrive until the Conservative speaker had almost finished his address, a situation which did

not prevent Kenworthy from launching into a vigorous reply. What followed is rather interesting. He was staying overnight at Christ Church, and owing to some misunderstanding was escorted about midnight with shooting sticks, gun cases, and other luggage, into the wrong room. The owner, an Irishman and a Conservative, entering somewhat later, and perceiving a burly figure beneath the bedclothes, fled, under the impression that some drunken vagrant had invaded the sanctuary. . . .

John Strachey and Jonathan Cape, both of whom I had met in London, came at a time when I was reading in the British Museum; but I encountered R. W. Postgate, who had advised me to try my hand at fiction in the days of *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, when he was editor, and who had just published an eminently readable life of Wilkes. I had expected a lean, ascetic figure, rendered so by long and ardent contemplation of the ills of the proletariat. He was neither. I was seeing a good deal of Cole at that time, and since Postgate is Cole's brother-in-law, I suppose I had held the two men in far too close an association. Postgate spoke about the fallacies of Empire to a tepid audience in the Labour Club. . . .

Then William Mellor came, trumpeting the scope of the new *Daily Herald*, 'all the recognized

features of the daily press', one penny—amply justified in the make-up of the paper at the present time. There was a hectic night in the Union when Miss Susan Lawrence confronted Mr. Neville Chamberlain (save in public discussion across the floor of the House they had never addressed each other before)—and proved, dialectically at any rate, that she was the better man of the two. Chamberlain who led, conceded the Government a few *little* things to its credit. And Nemesis, in a dowdy dark-wine dress, square jawed, and terrible, swooped upon him. 'Was the signing of the Arbitration Clause a *little* thing?' she asked. 'Let the Right Honourable Gentleman go and ask his brother!' A delighted assembly hung upon her words to the close. The late Earl of Birkenhead I did not hear in Oxford; but I could only conclude from my summing up of undergraduate opinion that he was not (in these years, at any rate) very popular with the younger men. The bully of peculiar talent is apt to become a bore, and at times a very ordinary nuisance. On one occasion not long before I came up, he had stalked into the Union debate while one of the members was speaking—a piece of conduct infringing the regulations of the House. B——, my fellow-lodger, related that he was present at the debate when the foundation of Birkenhead's political belief had been

challenged by an undergraduate member. Was it true, that, at the close of their university careers, Sir John Simon and he had tossed for allocation of parties, Liberal or Conservative?—and that Sir John Simon had won?' Birkenhead made a vehement repudiation. 'Young puppy,' he snorted again and again, 'young puppy! . . .'

Naomi Royde-Smith came talking about witches —pink, a little shrill and schoolmarmy, but in a charming blue gown; John Freeman, ponderous, solemn; Clifford Bax, ginger, bearded, owlish, prescient; Sir Nigel Playfair, taut, rosy, bubbling good humour for a National Theatre; George Lansbury, avuncular, benign, with the Socialist viewpoint of the nineties. We sat beneath poor Studdart Kennedy in St. Mary's, remarking as we emerged, the cough that had impaired but little the vigour of his address. He died a few weeks later. Walford Davies, in the same place, held a great audience on Music and Religion, though what it was all about I could not, even at the point of leaving the meeting, very well remember. I fancy I have seen Lord David Cecil in St. Mary's, singing with the rapt intensity of the Cecils—'There is a green hill far away. . . .' Certainly, Lord Robert, rosier than ever I imagined a Cecil could be—a well-kept Friar of Orders Grey—suffered a bombardment of questions concerning the League of Nations, levelled by Indians,

Hungarians, and even White Russians in the Union Hall; and of women at other times, the dark, provocative, and not a little discursive, Jenny Lee, on Russia, and 'my constituency' in Lanark; Miss Maude Royden, grey hairs wisping from her cap. . . .

The list runs without end. . . .

*Of Contemporaries . . .*

It is safer to say little: that future Archbishop of Canterbury may be dispensing quinine on the Gold Coast twenty years hence, or shrimping for preferment in some ecclesiastical backwater; that future Prime Minister—and these are much more thick upon the ground—may have become a B.B.C. announcer, a stockbroker, or to be found eating out his heart in an obscure secondary school. Who can say? I have in mind at least a dozen potential Prime Ministers, a number of whom are almost certain to be disappointed.

The Wits? University wit is so brittle—one wonders how long it will sustain itself in the currents and cross-currents of the machine age. 'We pass now from the general to the particular —the none too particular, the Labour Party,' will evoke applause in an undergraduate assembly

where verbal gymnastics are appreciated, and where the only subjects discussed with passion and conviction are sex issues; but what of the coalfields, what of the great industrial areas? Men and women with another, and hardly less valid experience of life than that to be derived from the universities, are not to be fobbed off with such dry biscuits.

On the whole one prefers to wait. There is much talent, and some genius in Oxford; and that is all one cares to state. Of the more outstanding figures touched with the 'fierceness' that Winston Churchill declares to be a significant quality for success in public life, they are so likely to be unaffected by any appraisement of mine, that I take the easier course, and in the end say nothing. . . .

### *Farewell*

Thus remains the dark viaduct to the 'up' platform, the familiar bookstall, that catalogue of departures so often perused during these three years, the pyramidical cans, and the crates whereof one has still time to read the labels. After all, leave-takings have not been too lengthy—a handshake, and a swifter word. 'I will keep in touch with you. You will write?' One promises. It seems very difficult to comprehend that one

may never see them again in quite this way, and together, as now. . . .

For S—— goes to Burma, where (lean cuss!) he may very well be chewed up by Dacoits; and B—— to the turmoil of Germany for an indefinite period. Of the others H—— is bound for Glasgow (whither I will never follow him!) to work for a teaching certificate; J—— to an obscure quarter of South Wales; and A—— has found a job in a provincial university; while K—— and B—— and L—— have found no job at all. D——, an ex-miner from Durham, who is smart enough to pull off a 'first', anticipates a research scholarship. As for myself, there is still a job of work in the coalfields. . . .

Good-bye, university! We run out, the meadows, Godstowe, and the low wall of the nunnery, wheel to one's left shoulder. Now all Oxford falls away, a flicker of the conscious, a dithyrambic dancing to the wheels . . . sunshot shadows with the cattle and the clover—C. E. M. Joad, in a blue shirt, speaking—Big Tom Tower bell groaning out its plaint—Mr. Harold Acton faintly mincing—gang of roaring 'hearties' on the tavern doorstep—handkerchief of blackberries on the slope of Cumnor—ukelele prinking through the cleft of Holywell—pitter-patter footsteps in the hollow Camera—old port, biscuits, waiters, butlers —white stone, grey stone, green stone, cloisters

—black and white of Proctors, sober gait of 'bull dogs'—the power and the glory of the undergraduette. . . .

The train gathers speed. Banbury with cakes —as ever . . . through Nottingham, the Great Divide of tonic air, and of perception. A thin littering of headstocks as the coalbelt draws in. On platform after platform the *Star*, the *Evening News*, and *Evening Standard* give place to newspapers with a local habitation and a name. A robust northern dialect prevails. Chimneys thicken, dark caverns of furnace roofing, vistas metal-ribbed, the brisk play of works' locomotives, occupy the railway route. Here, upon the sooty façade of a long row of working-class dwellings, every housewife has whitened her upper and lower window-sills with a gesture of courage for which society has no decorations. . . .

Now the familiar landmarks: on a hill, the grey folly set up by one Whig oligarch in the year that Boston harbour darkened with importunate tea, and labelled with the Boston name. At the foot of it acres and acres of workshops and foundries and sidings. . . .

Still on. . . .

Now headstocks, coal ranged in many wagons, flicker of pulleys, ochre of fumes, the clatter of clogs. . . . A porter still stands before the long grille of the cinema. At the four lane-ends are

men who sat with me on the same benches at school. The bus fills up at the bottom of the hill. Here of all people is the horsekeeper. He grins broadly: 'How do?'

'How do you do?'

'Home again, lad?'

'Yes.'

'For good?'

'Aye. . . .'

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